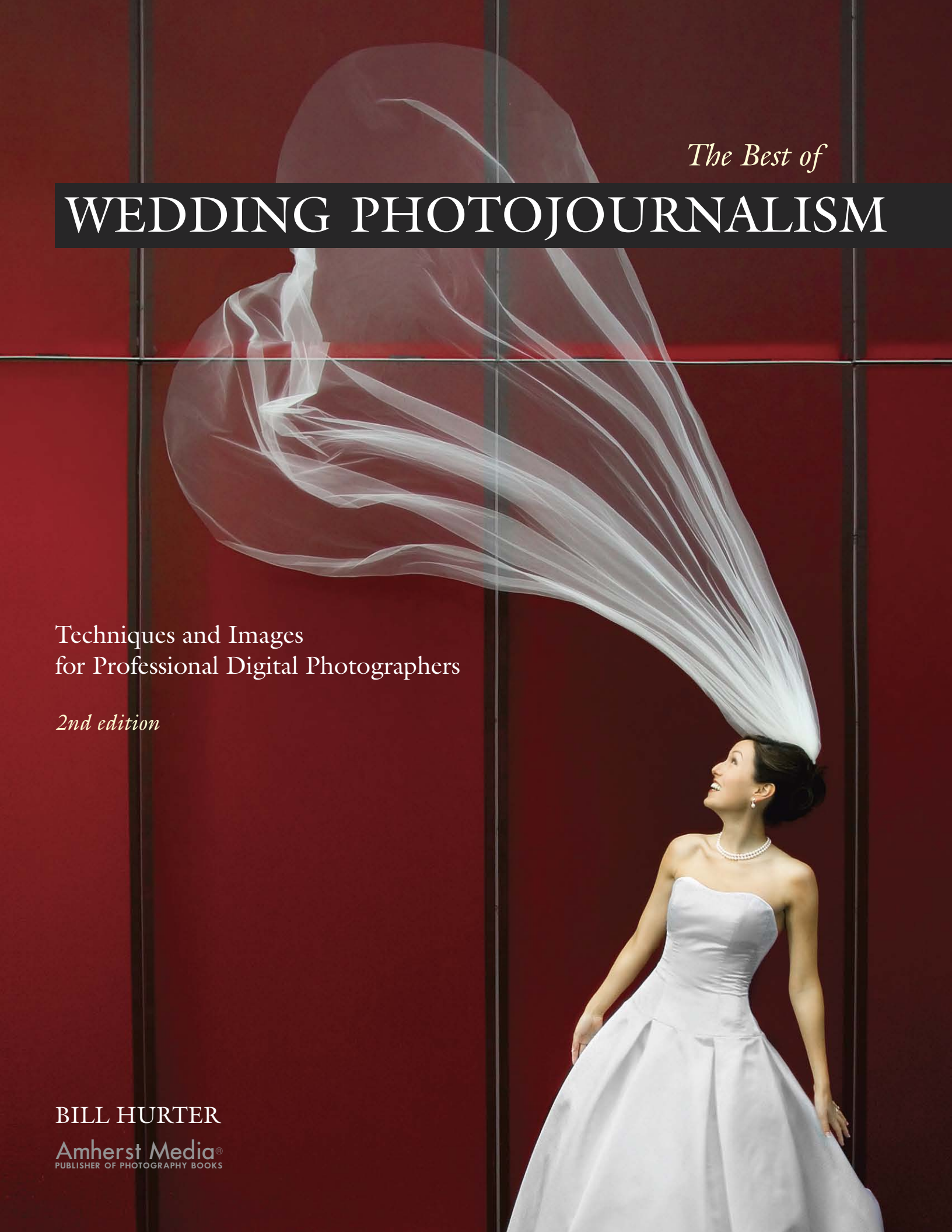
The Best of

WEDDING PHOTOJOURNALISM

Techniques and Images
for Professional Digital Photographers

2nd edition



BILL HURTER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

LANDMARKS IN WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY 8

WPI and WPPI 8

Denis Reggie 9

The Digital Revolution 10

Adobe Photoshop 10

Times Have Changed 11

1. THE NATURE OF WEDDING PHOTOJOURNALISM 12

The Old *vs.* The New 12

Powers of Observation 13

The Beauty of Reality 15

Storytelling 15

Posed Shots 16

Using Assistants 16

Anticipation and Preparation 19

Reaction Time 20

Capturing the Emotion 20

Sidebar: Dressing for Success 20

Making the Average Extraordinary 21

Uniqueness 22

Style 23

Awareness 23

People Skills 24

Having Fun 25

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM GARNER.

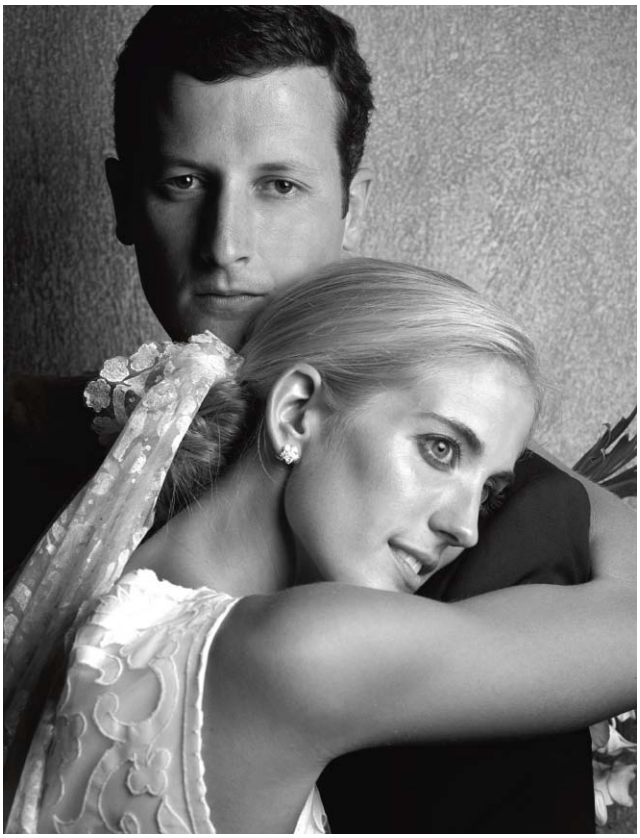
2. EQUIPMENT 27
The 35mm DSLR 27
Autofocus Technology 29
Instant Feedback 31
ISO Settings 31
Lenses 33
Zoom Lenses 33
Prime Lenses 35
Wide-Angles 35
Telephotos 36
Sidebar: Mike Colón's Approach 36
Focal Length and Chip Size 37
Flash 37
On-Camera Flash 37
Off-Camera Flash 38
Bounce-Flash Devices 38
Barebulb Flash 39
Studio Flash Systems 39
Lighting Accessories 41
Flashmeter 41
Remote Triggering Devices 41
Light Stands 42
Reflectors 42
Backup and Emergency Equipment 42

3. PREPARATION AND THE WEDDING DAY 43
Meet with the Bride and Groom 43
Scout the Wedding Locations 43
Plan the Timing 47
Engagement Portraits 47
Sidebar: Get Information on the Vendors 48
Pre-Ceremony Coverage 49
The Bride 49
The Groom 51
Watch for Details 52
Photographing the Ceremony 52
The Bride's Arrival 52
The Procession 52

TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCUS BELL.
BOTTOM PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA CLAIRE.

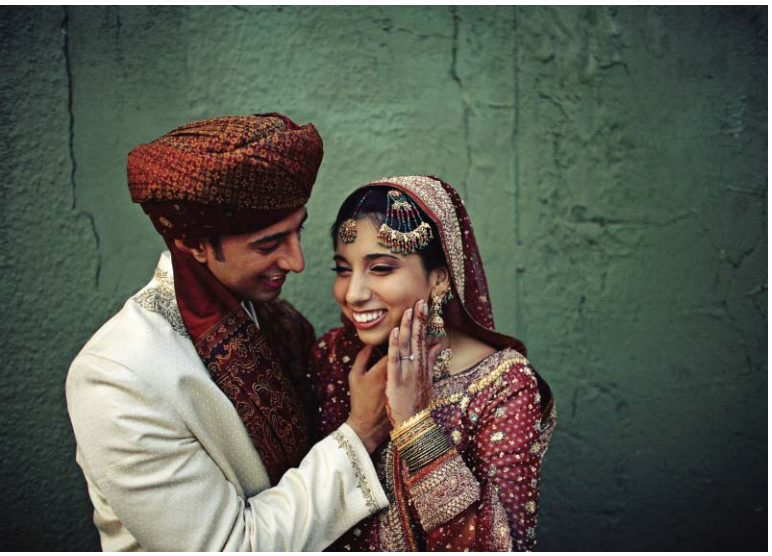
PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN JAIRAJ.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MAURICIO DONELLI.



The Ceremony 52
The Couple's Exit 53
Sidebar: Don't Get Too Caught Up in the Emotion . .55
Photographing the Reception 56
Your Approach 56
Room Overviews and Details 57
The Key Players 57
Scheduled Events 57
Cutting the Cake 59
The First Dance 59
The Bouquet Toss 59
Leaving the Reception 60
Sidebar: Table Shots 60
Lighting 60
Pole Lighting 60
Videographer's Lighting 60
Rings 61
Little Ones 61

4. COMPOSITION AND DESIGN 62
The Rule of Thirds 62
Direction 65
Pleasing Compositional Forms 65
Subject Tone 66



Focus 66
Lines 67
Shape 68
Tension and Balance 69

5. POSING FOR "FORMALS" 72
Posing Principles 74
The Head-and-Shoulders 74
Face Positions 74
The Seven-Eighths View 75
The Three-Quarters View 75
The Profile View 76
The Gaze 76
The Arms 77
The Hands 77
The Feet 78
Portrait Lengths 80
Full-Length Portraits 80
Three-Quarter-Length Portraits 80
Head-and-Shoulders Portraits 80
Camera Height 80
Sidebar: Scheduling the Important Formals 81
Formal Portraits of the Bride 81
Formal Portraits of the Groom 82
Formal Portraits of the Bride and Groom 85

6. GROUP PORTRAITS 90
Types of Groups 90
Backgrounds 90
Composition 93
Groupings 93
Couples 93
Trios 94
Even-Numbered Groups 97
Larger Groups 97
Really Big Groups 99
Sidebar: Panoramic Groups 99
Focus and Depth of Field 100
After You've Snapped the Shutter 100

TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY JESH DE ROX.
BOTTOM PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY AND JULIA WOODS.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BECKSTEAD.

7. WEDDING ALBUMS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS . .101
Basic Design Principles 101
Title Page 101
Left and Right Pages 101
Variety 103
Visual Weight 104
Reading Direction 105
Traditional Albums 105
Post-Mounted Albums 105
Bound Albums 105
Library Binding 106
Magazine-Style Digital Albums 106
Covers 106
Sidebar: Creativity Counts 106
Layout 106
Storytelling 107
David Anthony Williams 109
Charles Maring 109
Design Templates 111
The Design Factor 111
Sidebar: Mini Albums 111
Signing Off on the Design 112
Special Effects 113
Borders 113
Cross-Processing 115
Infrared Photography 115
Handcoloring 116
Panoramics and Gatefolds 116
Tilting the Camera 116
Fine Printing 117

GLOSSARY 118

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS 120

INDEX 123

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bill Hurter has been involved in the photographic industry for the past thirty years. He is the former editor of *Petersen's PhotoGraphic* magazine and currently the editor of both *AfterCapture* and *Rangefinder* magazines. He has authored over thirty books on photography and hundreds of articles on photography and photographic technique. He is a graduate of American University and Brooks Institute of Photography, from which he holds a BFA and Honorary Masters of Science and Masters of Fine Art degrees. He is currently a member of the Brooks Board of Governors. Early in his career, he covered Capitol Hill during the Watergate Hearings and worked for three seasons as a stringer for the L.A. Dodgers. He is married and lives in West Covina, CA.

Foreword

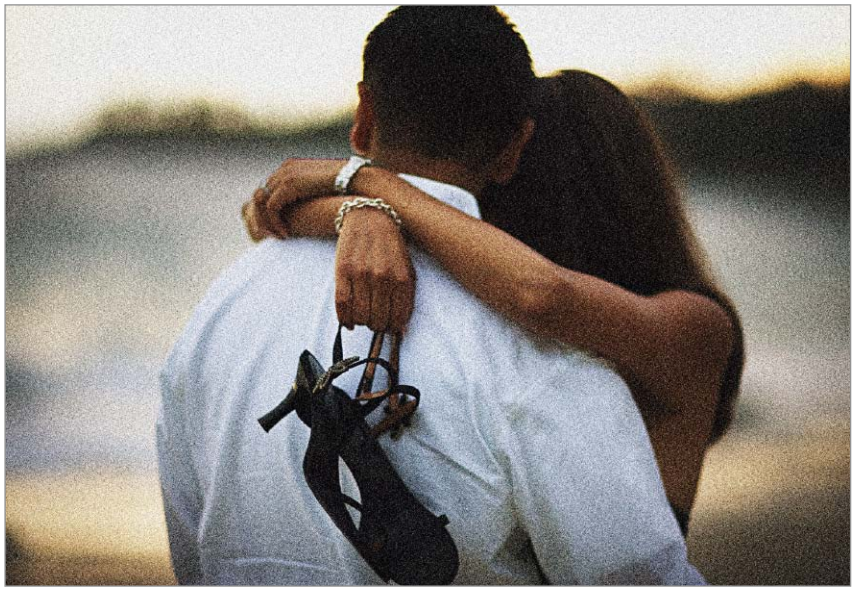
LANDMARKS IN WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

Not that many years ago, wedding photographers were known as "weekend warriors; they were wedding photographers on wedding days and worked at other full-time jobs the rest of the week. The status of the wedding photographer—both among other photographers and the public at large—was very low. They were often insufficiently equipped to provide first-rate photographs of the wedding and photographed almost everything with on-camera flash. In some cases, not only was their photographic technique suspect, so were their business practices. The phrase "fly by night" often described the struggling weekend warrior.

Of course, there existed the reputable studio photographers who also offered expert wedding coverage, but it was markedly different than the wedding coverage one sees today. These photos—90 percent of them anyway—were posed, and if they weren't posed, the people in the photos were aware of the presence of the photographer and often "mugged" for the camera.

WPI and WPPI

In 1981, an organization was formed (coincidentally, an organization I currently work for) to upgrade the techniques and business practices of the wedding photographer. WPI (Wedding Photographers Interna-



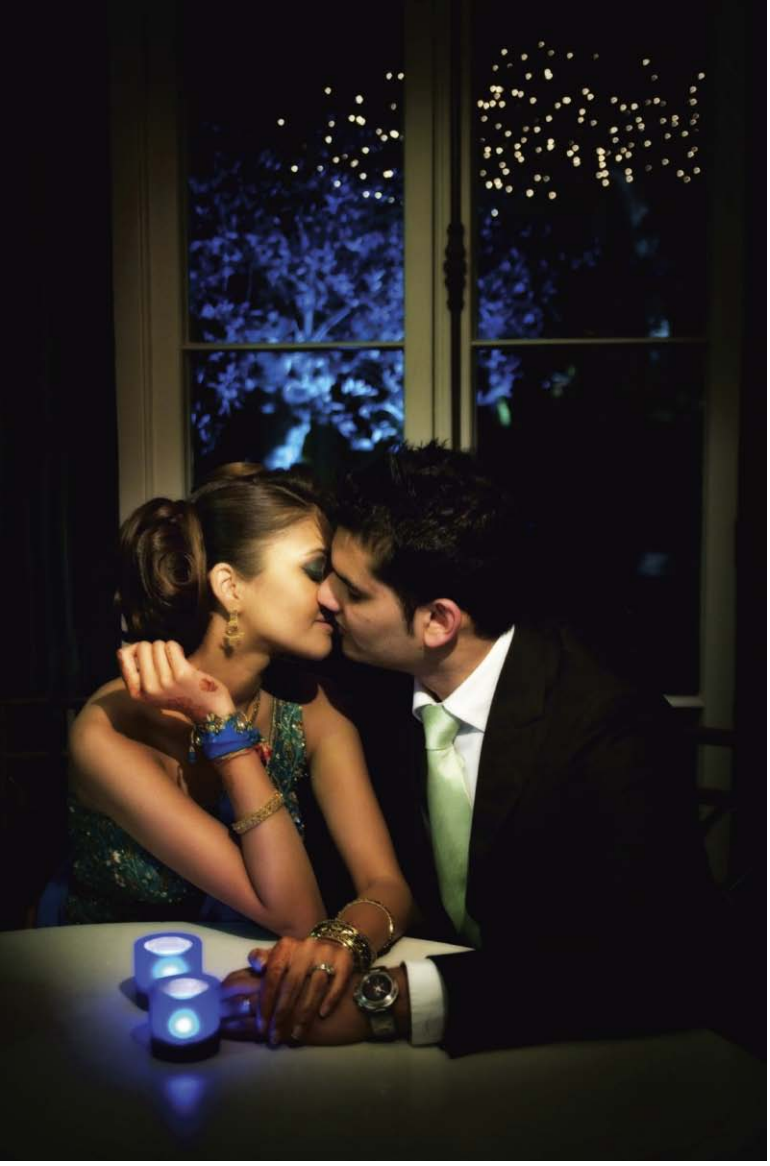
Fernando Basurto created this intimate engagement portrait in Laguna Beach, CA. Note that you cannot even see the couple's faces. Fernando says, "Rather than trying to pose the subjects, I let them do their own thing and work around them, looking for the right moment to capture their emotional impulses. This image is a perfect example of my photographic style. Although the couple was photographed from the back, their intimate interaction suggests a feeling of romance." The image was treated with a heavy dose of grain by master printmaker Jonathan Penney. (Canon EOS-1D Mark II; EF 85mm f/1.2L II USM lens; available light; ISO 800; 1/640 second at f/1.2)

Digital technology has revolutionized wedding photography. In this image, made by Nick Adams in the photojournalistic tradition, the couple is unaware of the photographer's presence. He used a remote speedlight fired from camera left to provide dramatic light that defines the subjects and the folds of the gown. He synchronized the flash exposure with the daylight exposure of $\frac{1}{160}$ second at f/6.3. This technique is known as dragging the shutter and allows the ambient light to record naturally. (Nikon D2X; AF-S DX Zoom-Nikkor 12–24mm f/4G IF-ED lens; ISO 100)

tional), as it was known then, brought together these photographers for an annual convention, which provided excellent networking opportunities and speakers from all over the world to educate them on the art and technique of wedding photography. It was an organization that came along at the right time; it was instantly accepted and provided a home and never-before-experienced status for the disenfranchised weekend warriors. The creation of WPI (and subsequently WPPI; portrait photographers were later added into the organization's fold to create Wedding and Portrait Photographers International) was a turning point in the evolution of wedding photography.

Denis Reggie

Another landmark was the emergence of a former sports photographer named Denis Reggie, who proclaimed himself a "wedding photojournalist." Like WPI, Reggie's words and images were well received by both photographers and brides. He was like a breath of fresh air, instantly giving this brand of photography credibility and salability—and gradually enhancing the



Almost no light is needed for a fine digital exposure like this one made by Stuart Bebb. The image was made by candlelight and the light of a small handheld video light (50W) held by the photographer. (Nikon D200; Sigma 18–50mm f/2.8 EX DC Macro lens at 31mm; 4/10 second at f/2.8; ISO 400)

status of those who practiced this unique brand of documentary photography. Reggie's purpose was (and is) to provide brides with their own unique and personal story, not a generic version of someone else's wedding.

The Digital Revolution

Another important factor that has completely changed the landscape of wedding photography is the overwhelming acceptance of digital as the format preferred by both brides and photographers. Remarkable convenience and flexibility are the obvious benefits of digital photography over film, but rapid-fire improvements in the technology have not only aided in the transition, they have also spurred manufacturers to become more innovative and competitive with each other in new product development.

While on-camera flash and plenty of batteries were wedding-day staples in days gone by, today most photographers don't even reach for the flash except in near total darkness or when a special flash effect is desired. Previously unimaginable ISO settings—up to 102,400 on the Nikon D3S—are now at the disposal of every photographer, making natural-light photography more accessible than ever. Image-stabilization technology, both in-camera and in-lens, has also made it possible to shoot sharp hand-held images in extremely low light. Additionally, multiple remote flash units can be controlled via the camera's on-board Flash Commander (Nikon) so that an entire room or location can be lit up like a Hollywood set—with the photographer orchestrating everything from the camera position using a few simple menu commands.

The film-based wedding photographer would often worry about the amount of film that was being exposed; this presented a cost that could only be controlled by shooting less. With digital, this is not a concern; because there is no lab fee for processing and proofing digital images. Free of that cost, the photographer, especially the wedding photojournalist, is at liberty to make many more exposures and to experiment liberally without the worry of escalating lab fees.

The net result of this torrent of technology is that wedding photojournalists can now be virtually invisible if they want to—prowling the wedding, experimenting at will, and recording moments unobserved from afar or right up close as they see fit.

Adobe® Photoshop®

Without a doubt, Adobe Photoshop has permanently changed the style and look of wedding imagery. The photographer, in the comfort of his home or studio, can now routinely accomplish special effects that in years past could only be achieved by a master printer.

Photoshop, and its many plug-ins and companion applications, has made wedding photography the most creative venue in all of photography—and brides love it. Digital albums, assembled with desktop-publishing hardware and software or in Photoshop, are quickly becoming the preferred album type, and the style these albums bring to the wedding experience helps to make every bride and groom a celebrity—and every wedding album a one-of-a-kind book.

Times Have Changed

Many wedding photojournalists have attained a superstar status no one would have dreamed of twenty years ago. Their work is routinely featured in the top magazines around the country and they are in demand fifty-two weeks a year. They have a large staff, a network of like-minded colleagues and, most importantly, today's wedding photojournalists have won over the hearts and minds of brides of every age and ethnicity. Celebrities seek them out to photograph their weddings and parties, and the circle of acceptance grows wider each day. No location is too remote for these photographers, and the successful wedding photojournalist now may only work in their own country part of the time.

As its acceptance has grown, wedding photojournalism has also come to be important enough to encompass other styles of photography. It is now much more than pure documentary photography. You will also see elements of editorial and fashion photography and more than a touch of fine-art photography in the work of the contemporary wedding photojournalist. You will even see healthy helpings of posed images—although photojournalists approach these moments as choreographed scenes in which the subjects are natural players.

Times have changed, and they will change again. But for now, wedding photojournalists are among the highest paid and most well-respected photographers on earth. And the incredible images these talented artists are producing have changed the face of wedding photography forever.

Today's wedding photographers can quickly rise to the stature of rock stars. Such is the happy fate of Seattle wedding specialist Jim Garner, who is known for his exciting, emotion-filled wedding coverage. This kind of portrait exemplifies the photojournalist's approach: bring about the emotion of the moment, but where possible, adhere to the elements of good posing and design.

1. THE NATURE OF WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

One of the reasons wedding photography has achieved such high regard is that it is the permanent record of an important day in the couple's lives. It is also the culmination of months of preparation and countless expenses. Additionally, it is often the day when the bride will feel her most beautiful and the groom his most handsome. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The Old *vs.* the New

According to the traditional approach, wedding photography features dozens and dozens of posed pictures culled from a "shot list" passed down by generations of other traditional wedding photographers. There may be as many as seventy-five scripted shots—from cutting the cake, to tossing the garter, to the father of the bride walking his daughter down the aisle. In addition to the scripted moments, traditional photographers fill in the album with "candids," many of which are staged or at least made when the subjects are aware of the camera. A typical candid might be made when the bride and groom are dancing, see the photographer, and turn to the camera while making the appropriate funny faces. Because the traditional photographer intrudes on the

"Seeing is the real key to harnessing the potential of any given scene," says David Beckstead, who aims to create photographic uniqueness in all of his images. He says of this scene, "I immediately saw the potential of the reflections and the 'X' style lead-in lines. The bride reached up to fix her flower and I told her to stop and leave her hand there. It seemed so natural and much better than any pose I could have come up with." (Canon EOS-1D Mark II; Canon EF 70mm–200mm f/2.8L IS USM; Nik ColorEfex Pro 3.0 filter)

The families often forget that Marcus Bell is even there photographing the wedding. Of course, he spends a lot of time with the couple before the wedding building their confidence in him, but once the day's activities begin, he's almost invisible. That's how he gets priceless shots like this.

naturalness of the scene, the coverage is structured and, in the view of many, fictional.

The photojournalistic approach is quite different. While the photojournalist covers the same events, he or she usually does so without interference and intrusion. Working at a distance with longer-than-normal lenses and (normally) no flash allows the scene to unravel with all of the spontaneity and genuine emotion that naturally occurs at such wonderful events. Instead of being a part of every moment, the photojournalist tends to fade into the background so the subjects are not aware of his or her presence. This results in images that are spontaneous and lifelike. Many wedding photojournalists even photograph groups with this non-intrusive approach, preferring to wait until things "happen."

As you can imagine, creating wedding images in the non-obtrusive, photojournalistic style requires a completely different approach—and set of skills—than traditional wedding photography. That is the subject of the rest of this chapter.

Powers of Observation

Like any form of photojournalism—whether it be news photography, fashion photography, or sports photography—one of the prerequisites to success is the skill of observation, an intense power to concentrate on the events before you. Through keen observation, a skill that can be enhanced through practice, the photographer begins to develop a knack for predicting what will happen next. This is partially due to understanding the intricacies of the event, the order in which events will occur, and partially a result of experience. The more weddings one photographs, the more accustomed one becomes to their rhythm and flow—but the sense of anticipation is also a function of clearly seeing what is transpiring in front of you and reacting to it quickly.

Above—*The photographer's powers of observation must be well-tuned on the wedding day. Here, David Beckstead caught sight of the bride having her makeup applied—an image that was reflected in a picture frame in the room. It is one of those details of the day almost no one else would have seen.*

Left—*This is an image of the last dance of the evening by Greg Gibson, a highly acclaimed photojournalist. The scene was lit by dim strands of Christmas lights that bathed the couple in a golden light. According to Greg, "They are so lost in each other that they're completely unaware of their surroundings." Gibson, who generally carries a Canon 85mm f/1.2 EF-L lens on his shoulder during the reception, managed to get the camera to his eye and shoot three frames before the couple was interrupted by a departing guest. The image was made at 1/10 second at f/1.2 at ISO 1600. In postprocessing, he bumped up the saturation, softened the details a bit, and added a slight vignette.*

There is an ebb and flow to every action. Imagine a pole-vaulter ascending at one moment, reaching the peak, then falling at the next—that moment of peak action is what the photographer strives to isolate. Although today's cameras make it possible to capture numerous frames per second, blanketing a

scene with high-speed exposures is not the key to success. Success is the result of remaining calm and quiet, paying close attention, and learning exactly when to press the shutter release. With a refined sense of timing and good observational skills, you will drastically increase your chances for successful exposures.

The Beauty of Reality

Traditional wedding photography is, to some, the quest for perfection. The pose, the lighting, and the expression are all designed to idealize the subject. This is a viable, artistically relevant pursuit, but it is not in the mind-set of the photojournalist. Instead, the ideal is to capture the reality of the situation with as little interference as possible. The true wedding photojournalist believes that flaws are part of nature—part of what makes a moment real and natural. This is not to say that the reality captured by the wedding photojournalist is harsh or otherwise unappealing. To the contrary, the photojournalist's record of the day should be a sensitive, flattering portrayal of the events that highlight the true emotions elicited.

Storytelling

Above all, the skilled wedding photojournalist is an expert storyteller. The wedding day is a collection of short episodes that, when pulled together, tell the story of an entire day. A good wedding photojournalist is aware of the elements of good storytelling—a beginning, middle, and end—as well as the aspects that make a story entertaining to experience—emotion, humor, tension, and resolution.

Gene Higa is a destination wedding photographer whose specialty is blending the culture of the destination into his wedding images. Gene calls this image "a typical Peruvian moment." The bride and groom arrived at the La Catedral in the Plaza Mayor of Lima late in the afternoon. They were immediately surrounded by a crowd of local shoppers who wanted to offer their blessings or to touch the bride. Rather than trying to clear the crowd, Gene incorporated all the diverse personalities into an image that became the couple's favorite. Gene, who shot this image with a Canon 1D Mark II and a 24mm f/2.8 lens, never crops his images. He likes each one the way he framed it.

According to wedding photographer Charles Maring, a good story includes many details that go unobserved by most people, even those attending the event. He says, "Studying food and wine magazines, fashion magazines, and various other aspects of editorial images has made me think about the subtle aspects that surround me at a wedding. Chefs are preparing, bartenders are serving, waiters are pouring champagne or wine. My goal is to bring to life the whole story from behind the scenes, to the nature around the day, to the scene setters, to the blatantly obvious. In short, I want to capture a complete story."

Posed Shots

Virtually every wedding—even the purest photojournalistic effort—includes some number of posed images. These are the "formals," the pictures that every bride (and bride's parent) will want. These may include a group portrait of the bride and groom with the groom's family, and one with the bride's family. Also frequently requested is a group portrait of the wedding party, and sometimes the entire wedding assembly—including all the guests. These formal, non-photojournalistic images may be done with editorial flair or more traditionally, but they are part of the wedding photojournalist's pictorial obligation and can often be done in as little as fifteen minutes before or after the ceremony. Often, these images are not featured in the photographer's own promotional materials, but be assured, they are an important ingredient in every wedding and an expected part of the package.

Facing page—*Here is a Jeff Hawkins formal that performed two purposes. First, it is a lovely emotional portrait of the bride and groom. Second, it is a beautiful portrait of their rings. Notice the elegant hand posing—a very traditional element done very well.*

Using Assistants

Even a photojournalist who possesses extraordinary powers of observation paired with razor-sharp timing and reflexes can still miss a moment when someone steps in the way or one of the principals in the scene

Formals are part of even the most ardent photojournalist's wedding coverage. Here a little something different was done to handle the formals and groups. Jeff Hawkins combined a lot of small group formals with two large, decidedly informal images to create an interesting two-page album spread. The contrast of big and little, formal and informal gives the spread a unique energy.

Great wedding photojournalists can freeze a fleeting moment in time and space. Here, the bride—seemingly in a hurry and with a note of concern in her face—casts a look over her shoulder, completely unaware of photographer Joe Buissink. The many things happening in this moment are revealed in a split second.

turns away at the last moment. Even with the best-laid plans, some great shots still get away. As a result, many wedding photographers feel that one person cannot adequately cover a wedding—there's simply too much action going on at once.

An assistant is invaluable at the wedding. He or she can run interference for you, change or download memory cards, organize guests for a group shot, take flash readings and predetermine exposure, tape light stands and cords securely with duct tape, and tackle a thousand other chores. Your assistant can survey your backgrounds looking for unwanted elements—or even become a moveable light stand by holding your secondary flash or reflectors.

If you decide to work with an assistant, make sure that he or she is trained in your photographic and lighting styles. The wedding day is not the time to find out that the assistant either doesn't understand or—worse yet *approve*—of your techniques; you should both be on the same page. A good assistant will even be able to anticipate your next need and keep you on track for upcoming shots.

Eventually, most assistants go on to become full-fledged wedding photographers. After you've developed confidence in an assistant, he or she can help with the photography—particularly at the reception, when there are too many things going on at once for one person to cover. Most assistants try to work for several different photographers to broaden their experience. It's not a bad idea to employ more than one assistant; if you get a really big job you can use both of them—or if one is unavailable, you have a backup assistant.

Assistants also make good security guards. I have heard many stories of gear "disappearing" at weddings. An assistant is another set of eyes whose priority it should be to safeguard the equipment. On that note, it is a very good idea for you and your second or third shooters to be using the same gear, or at least the same brand of gear, so that lenses can be borrowed for special situations. It also helps minimize confusion during the download process and postproduction workflow.

Many husband-and-wife teams cover weddings together, creating different types of coverage (formals vs. reportage, for example). These teams may also use assistants to broaden their coverage into a team effort.

Anticipation and Preparation

Preparation is the key to anticipating photographic opportunities. By being completely familiar with the format of the ceremony and events, you will know where and when an event will take place and be prepared for it. This kind of planning must take place long before the wedding day.

It is a good idea for the photographer to scout all of the venues at the same time of day as the events will actually take place. Many photographers take extensive notes on ambient lighting, ceiling height and surfaces, placement of windows, reflective surfaces (like mirrors or wood paneling), and other physical conditions that will affect the photography.

In addition, it is advisable to meet with the principal vendors, such as the florist, caterer, band director, hotel banquet manager, and so on, to go over the wedding-day plans and itinerary in detail. This information will assist you in developing a game plan for photographing each of the day's events.

Another good practice is to schedule an engagement portrait. This has become a classic element of wedding coverage, and one that is often included free of charge. The engagement portrait can be made virtually anywhere and allows the couple to get used to the working methods of the photographer. Then, on the wedding day, they are already accustomed to their photographer's rhythms and style of shooting. The experience also helps the threesome get to know each other better, so that on the wedding day the photographer doesn't seem like an outsider.

Drawing on all of this information, the photographer will be able to choreograph his or her own movements, taking the optimum position to document each

Moments like this don't wait for the photographer to get ready. They happen and then they're over. If you know the principals, their relationships, and the details of the moment, though, you can anticipate a scene like this. If you have truly great reflexes, it can even become an award-winning image—like this one by Joe Buissink.

Alisha and Brook Todd are known for creating images brimming with emotion. They immerse themselves in the day and are aware of the subtle nuances that the couple use to express their affection for one another.

phase of the wedding day. The confidence that this preparation provides is immeasurable. (*Note:* It also helps to put in the time. Arriving early and leaving late is one way to be assured you won't miss great shots.)

Reaction Time

Sports photographers rely on timing—a skill developed through preparation, observation, concentration, and anticipation. Being a wedding photojournalist requires the same skills. In short, the better you know the event and the more you can focus on what's happening around you—whether it is a basketball game or a wedding—the better your reflexes will become.

Additionally, there is an intangible aspect to reaction time that all photographers must hone. This is instinct—the internal messaging system that triggers you to react. Developing this means trusting yourself to translate input into reaction, analyzing what you see and are experiencing and determining the critical moment to hit the shutter release.

Joe Buissink, master at anticipation and timing, works remarkably fast when he shoots. A former assistant told me once that the first time he saw Joe shoot, he thought, "He couldn't possibly know what he's doing, he shoots so incredibly fast." The fact is, Buissink *does* work quickly—and definitely knows what he's doing. Buissink trusts the process, saying, "Trust your intuition so that you can react. Do not think. Just react or it will be too late."

Capturing the Emotion

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of wedding photojournalism, and also the most difficult to attain consistently, is the ability to capture the emotion of the moment. Some of the items discussed above, like working unobserved, anticipation, and preparedness, are all part of this mind-set. However, there is another key ingredient: the ability to immerse oneself in the events of

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

One might expect that a wedding photojournalist would dress down for the wedding—maybe not like the sports photographer with a photographer's vest and jeans, but casual. Tony Florez, a successful wedding photographer from San Juan Capistrano, CA, recommends otherwise. He believes that one of the keys to upscaling his wedding business was to live the motto "dress for success." To say he has upgraded his wardrobe is an understatement. He only wears Armani tuxedos to weddings; like the couple he is there to photograph, he looks like a million dollars. This is not to say that this is the secret to his success—he is also a gifted photographer—but simply dressing well has added to his confidence and enhanced his reputation.

Michele Celentano believes that one should "have fun with the brides." In a session that spanned two-and-a-half hours, Michele took this couple to their high school, a cemetery, a John Deere factory, and a train yard where there was a large wall mural. That's where this image was made. While the bride was not initially enthusiastic about the location, Celentano communicated her vision and pretty soon the bride got into it, too. Michele reminded the couple that they wouldn't have hired her if they didn't trust her instincts. She used two plug-ins in postproduction: Imagenomics Portrait for retouching and Nik Color Efex Pro 3.0's Glamour Glow. She also did a light once-over with Ron Nichols Production Retouching Palette to paint in a soft-edged vignette.

the day. The photographer must be able to feel and relate to the emotion of the moment. At the same time, you cannot be drawn into the events to the extent that you either become a participant or lose your objectivity, which is required to analyze the events with a clear head.

All of one's photographic, journalistic, and storytelling skills go into making pictures that evoke in viewers the same emotions experienced by those present on the wedding day. The photographer must move silently and alertly, always ready to make an exposure—listening, watching, sensitive to what is happening and what could happen in the next instant.

To Brook and Alisha Todd, two San Francisco-area wedding photographers, capturing emotion is what the wedding day is all about. In fact, it's why they enjoy photographing these timeless rituals. Their goal in all of their combined coverage is to produce a remembrance of how the bride and groom, as well as their family and friends, felt on that wedding day.

Celebrated wedding photojournalist Michele Celentano feels the same way. "I will never give up weddings," she says. "I love brides, grooms, the flowers, the fanfare, the symbol of new life and the idea of a new beginning."

Making the Average Extraordinary

Dennis Orchard has a lighthearted approach to his weddings. He calls them "lifestyle weddings" and his coverage combines informal black & white reportage with

Look at this award-winning panel of stories all unfolding simultaneously. The group is completely unaware of the photographer, Marcus Bell, and he probably had the opportunity to make only a few frames before they noticed him and became self-conscious. (Canon EOS 5D; Canon 85mm f/1.2 EF-L lens; ISO 500; 1/50 second at f/2)

creative, natural-color photography. Like most photojournalists faced with photographing family groups, he grins and bears it; he tries to give them a friendly, relaxed feeling rather than the formal structure that most group photos exhibit. What really appeals to Dennis, though, is the challenge. "I love to make the ordinary extraordinary. I thrive on average brides and grooms, Travelodge hotels, and rainy days in winter," he says. Orchard recently photographed an overweight bride who was "so frightened of the camera that every time I pointed it at her she would lose her breath and have a little anxiety attack." Using long lenses, he photographed her all day long without her being aware of the camera. He said he couldn't believe the final shots—she was beautiful in every frame. The bride later wrote him a note in which she said, "I never thought I could have pictures like this of me!" It was Dennis' best wedding of the year.

Uniqueness

No two weddings are ever the same, and it is the photographer's responsibility to capture the uniqueness of each event. This is also the fun part; with the abandonment of the cookie-cutter style of posed portraits, every wedding is a new experience with all-new challenges for the wedding photojournalist. Because wedding photojournalists work at a distance and avoid intruding on events, they can capture the true outpourings of emo-

tion between the participants. Documenting these natural and genuine moments is one of the primary means of documenting a wedding's uniqueness.

Style

One of the traits that separates wedding photojournalists from traditional wedding photographers is the element of style, an editorial feel pulled from the pages of today's bridal magazines. Because weddings—with all the associated clothing and jewelry—are big business, these magazines have flourished into behemoth issues each month. This is what brides see as they are planning their weddings, so it's how they expect to see their own wedding documented.

Noted Australian wedding photographer Martin Schembri calls the magazine style of wedding photography "a clean, straight look." It is reminiscent of advertising/fashion photography. In fact, if you study these magazines, you will quickly notice that there is often very little difference between the advertising photographs and the editorial ones (the images used to illustrate the articles). By studying consumer trends in wedding apparel, you can better equip yourself with an understanding of what contemporary brides want to see in their wedding photographs.

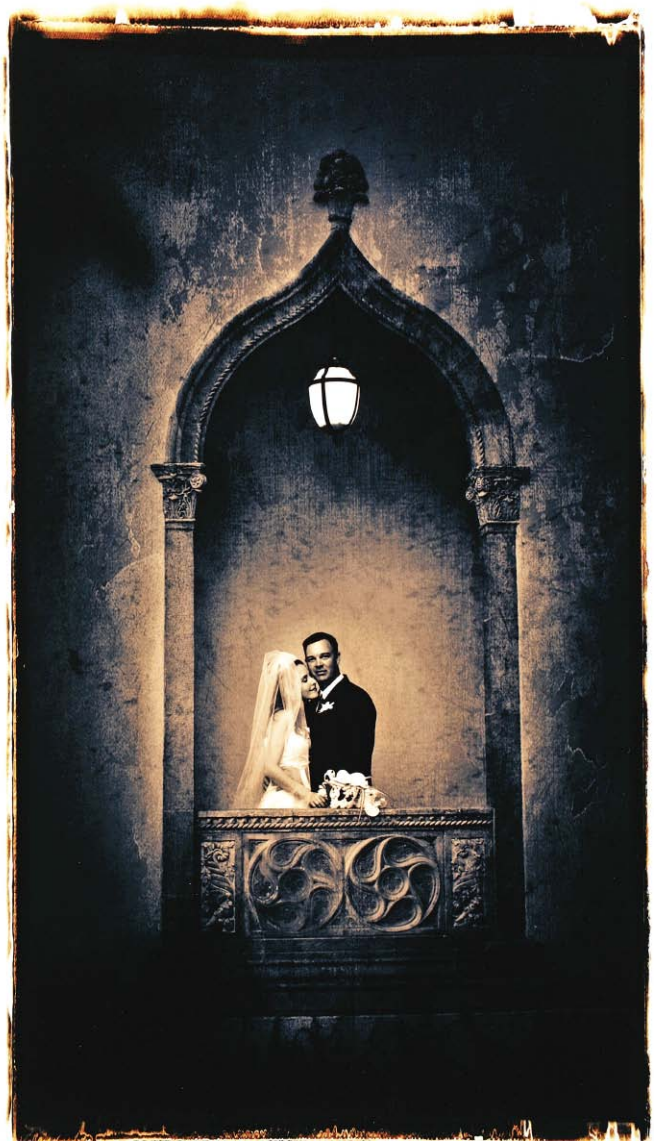
Some wedding photographers take style to the next level. Michael Schuhmann says of his work, "It's different; it's fashion, it's style. I document a wedding as a journalist and an artist, reporting what takes place, capturing the essence of the moment."

Awareness

Most wedding photojournalists greatly revere the work and philosophy of Henri Cartier-Bresson, who believed in the concept of "the decisive moment," a single instant that is released from the continuity of time by the photographer's skills. This moment is life defining; it's a moment like no other before or since, that defines the reality of the participants. As noted many times throughout this book, revealing the decisive moment can only be accomplished through a complete awareness of the scene. This attitude requires concentration, discipline, and sensitivity.

Many fine wedding photojournalists are also masters of full awareness. Photographers like Joe Buissink are able to become one with their equipment, the moment, and the emotion of the wedding couple. Buissink considers his equipment to be an extension of his body, his eye, and his heart. He says of the state, "My sense of self fades away. I dance with the moment . . . capturing the

Michael Schuhmann created this very stylish portrait using a variety of effects, including a very strong vignette and treatment with a variety of filters in postproduction. It is indicative of the stylish and dramatic look now being sought by the wedding community.



There are certain moments that rise above others as being "the" moment of the hour. So it is with this moment captured by Joe Buissink. The bride's body language reflects pure joy and heightened anticipation. The man's expression is one of pure respect and adoration. It is priceless moment, right down to the nuances of the hands.

essence of a couple." Buissink says the state of full awareness is not that difficult to find. "You must relax enough to be yourself and exhibit your pleasure in creating art. Do not look for the flow. It will find you. If you try to force it, it will be lost."

People Skills

Any wedding photographer, whether journalistic or traditional, needs to be a "people person," capable of inspiring trust in others. Generally, photojournalists are more reactive than proactive, but they cannot be flies on the wall for the entire day; interaction with the principal participants is crucial. Often those interactions occur at stressful moments, and that is when the photographer with people skills really shines.

Joe Buissink, for example, has been blessed with a "salt of the earth" personality that makes his clients instantly like and trust him. That trust increases his freedom to capture the event as he sees it. It also helps that Buissink sees weddings as significant and treats the day with great respect. Buissink says of his mental preparations for the wedding event, "You must hone your communication skills to create personal rapport with clients, so they will invite you to participate in their special moments." And he stresses the importance of being objective and unencumbered. "Leave your personal baggage at home. This will allow you to balance the three roles of observer, director, and psychologist."

Building a good rapport with your couple, the family, and people in general helps in the making of great pictures on the wedding day. While wedding photojournalists must be great observers and possess a keen sense of timing, there are also times when the photographer's interaction is the impetus for a great "staged

moment." This might be when formal portraits of the bride or groom (or both) are required, or when certain planned phases of the wedding are upcoming.

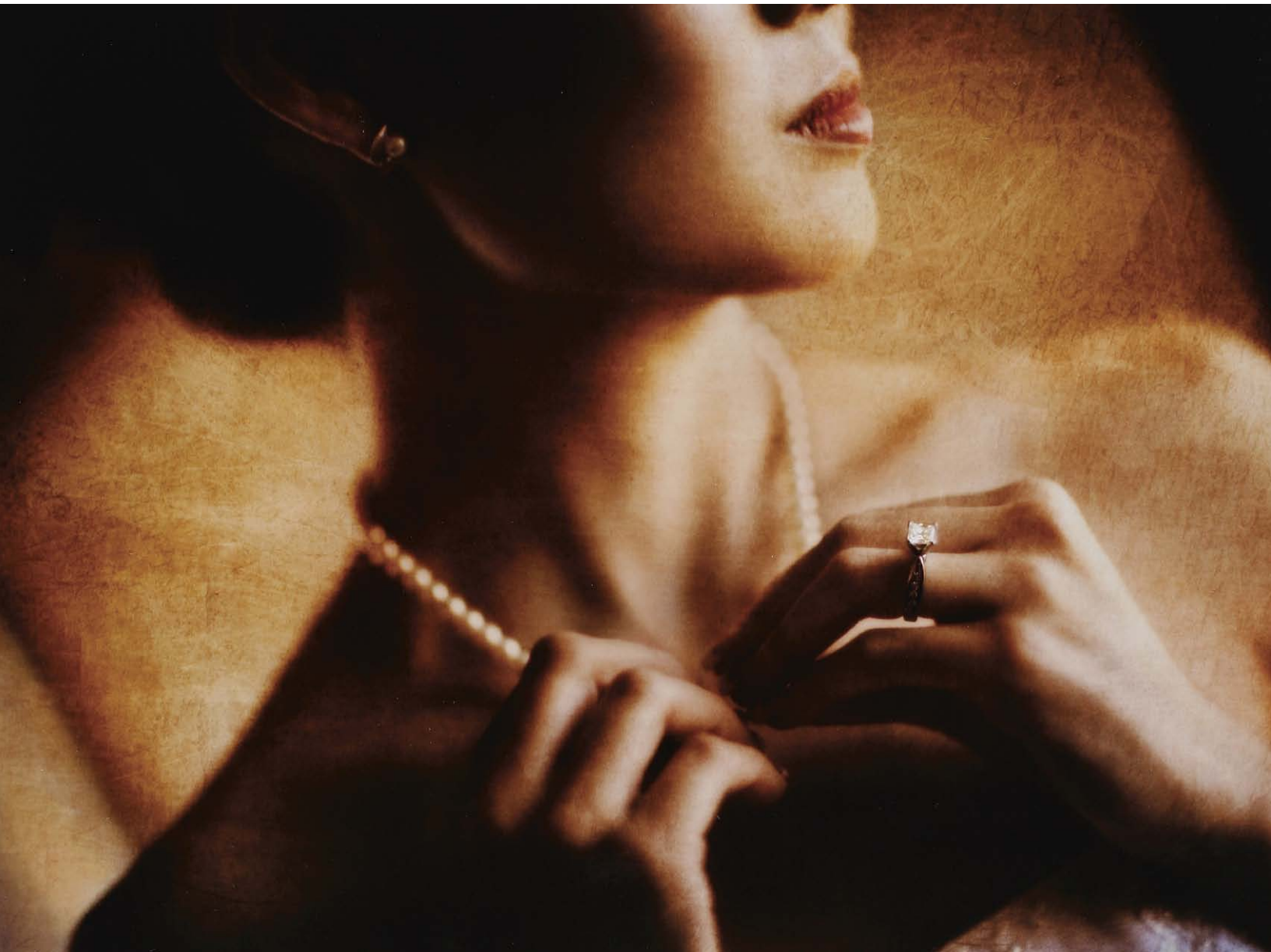
Rather than rejecting such situations as non-photojournalistic, the seasoned photojournalist embraces these moments and may or may not stage their outcome. He or she may even direct the overall action, just as a film director choreographs the elements of a scene to be filmed.

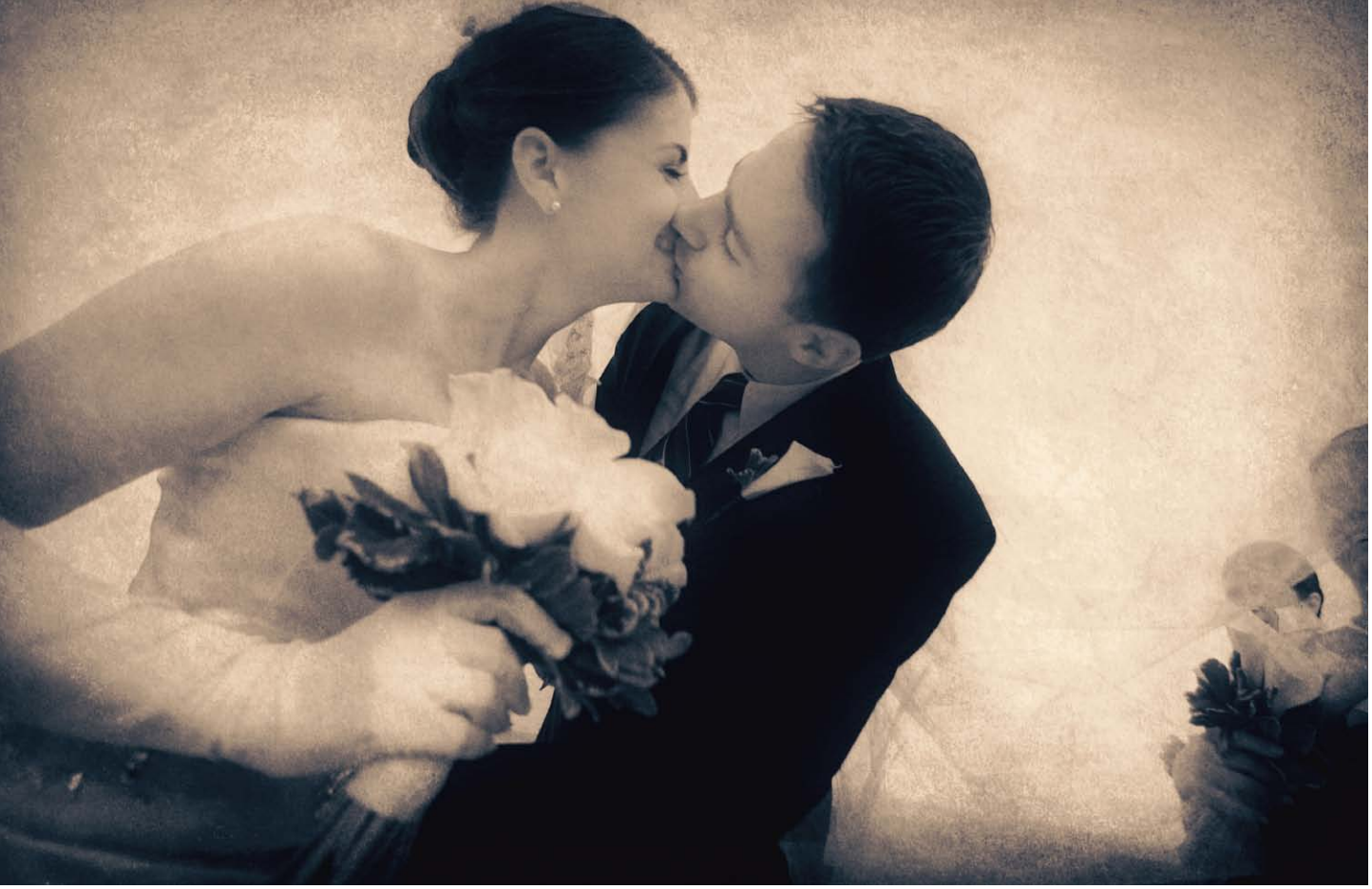
Having Fun

Because of the romantic nature of the event, it helps if the photographer is also a romantic—but it is not completely necessary. Beyond the romance, the wedding is a celebration for the couple's family and friends. The wedding photographer gets to be part of this joy and create pictures that tell the story of the fun.

Many wedding photojournalists feel blessed to be able to do what they do. For a great number of them, the appeal of photographing weddings is not the fees or even the prestige, it's simply that it is an occasion to have fun and to be a part of a meaningful and beautiful ritual. Photographer Michael Schuhmann, for example, truly loves his work. He explains, "I love to photograph people who are in love and are comfortable expressing it, or who are so in love that they can't contain it—then it's real." For the romantically inclined, wedding photojournalism is almost its own reward.

This fashionable image is an example of the way in which wedding photojournalism is moving toward a fashion/editorial look. JB Sallee created this image using available light, then worked it quite extensively in Photoshop using a variety of filters and effects. The severe cropping and tilt of the image make it not only different but extremely edgy. Brides love this style of imagemaking.





Above—*Michael Schuhmann created this image of the couple kissing and then treated it to a host of postproduction effects including a patterned layer that gives the image a textured appearance. Notice, too, that while kissing her groom, the bride is also laughing, making the image even more charming.*

Left—*Fast reflexes are needed to be a good wedding photojournalist. As photographer Jessica Claire tracked the bride and groom walking, a spontaneous notion of "Hey, we're married!" came over the couple and Jessica had the good instinct to capture it. (Canon EOS 20D; 70mm focal length; 1/1000 second at f/4)*

2. EQUIPMENT

Digital capture is, overwhelmingly, the choice of today's wedding photojournalists—for a number of reasons.

Every film photographer is wary of the number of rolls shot and the number remaining—and it is human nature to, at some point during the day, calculate the cost of all that film and processing. With digital, no such internal dialogue occurs. Wedding photographer Bambi Cantrell shoots more than a thousand exposures at every wedding. Because you can download your memory cards to a laptop and then reuse them, without having a huge lab bill for processing and proofing, you can shoot as much as you want without increasing costs.

Kevin Kubota hasn't shot a wedding on film since he purchased his Nikon D1X digital camera, saying that the quality is at least as good as 35mm film and that the creative freedom digital affords him is mind boggling. He can take more chances and see the results instantly, immediately knowing whether or not he got the shot. And the digital tools he has come to master in Photoshop make him a better, more creative photographer.

Joe Buissink, on the other hand, shoots both digital and film. He says he still prefers the look of film and the high-quality, fine-art aspects of a good fiber-base print made from a film negative—but he also recognizes that he has to keep up with changing technology.

Joe Buissink, shoots both film and digital. Here, the image was made digitally (on a Canon EOS 5D), but Joe used several types of Photoshop grain to simulate a silver-halide image.

The 35mm DSLR

The days of exclusively medium-format cameras being used for wedding photography are at an end, particu-

By far the greatest attribute of the 35mm DSLR is that it gives the wedding photographer the speed and flexibility to capture the wedding's spontaneity in real time. Marcus Bell made this delightful portrait with a Canon EOS 5D and EF 24–70mm f/2.8L USM lens. Marcus' exposure was 1/80 second at f/4 at ISO 800. The children were primarily lit by a picture window opposite to them, plus the ambient light in the room.

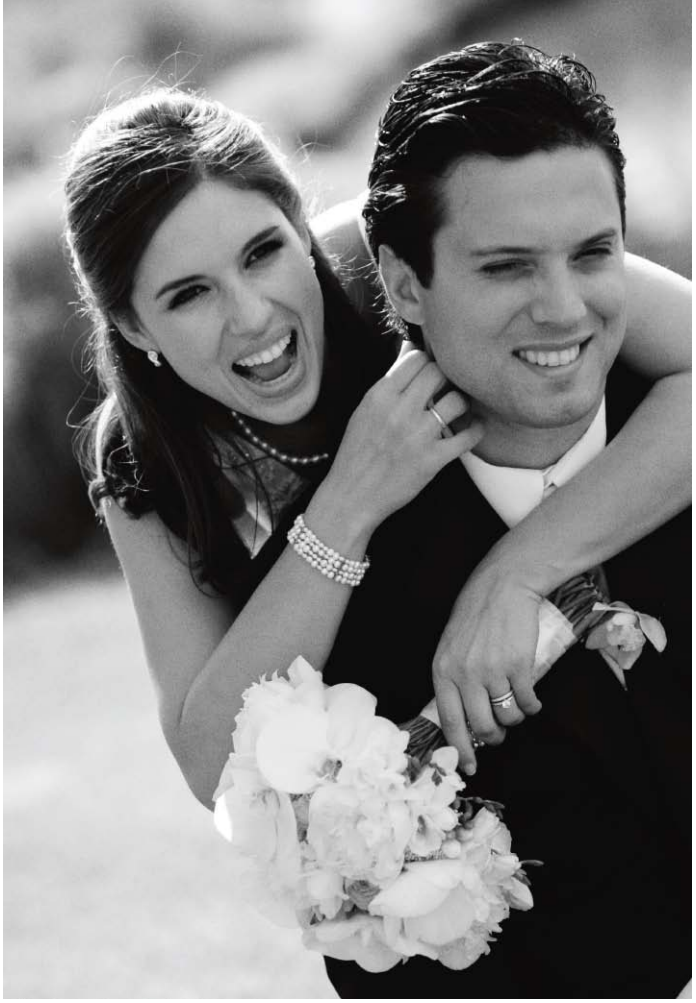
larly for wedding photojournalists. Faster lenses, cameras that feature eight-frame-per-second motor drives, and incredible developments in digital technology have led to the 35mm DSLR becoming widely accepted by professional wedding photographers. With the speed and mobility offered by these cameras, photographers are equipped to capture the wedding's spontaneity and excitement in real time. They can also capture more of the shots they envision—shots that might have slipped away with traditional, slower medium format gear.

Beyond ease of use, the consumer has come to accept 35mm as a viable choice for weddings. In the not-too-distant past, a wedding photographer might not be considered for a wedding if he or she wasn't shooting with a Hasselblad. This brand had become so entrenched in the mind of the public as the one-and-only camera for wedding photographers that it became a symbol for excellence in wedding photography.

Currently there are eight manufacturers of full-fledged systems: Canon, Nikon, Olympus, Fuji (which uses Nikon autofocus lenses), Pentax, Sony, Minolta/Konica, and Sigma (which uses the radically different Foveon X3 image sensor). Each manufacturer has several models in their product line to meet varying price points. Many of the pre-digital lenses available from these manufacturers for their film cameras also fit the

digital cameras, although sometimes with a corresponding change in effective focal length, depending on the size of the imaging sensor (for more on this, see page 37). In addition, a number of lens manufacturers also make autofocus lenses to fit various brands of DSLRs. These include Tokina, Tamron, and Sigma.

Autofocus Technology. Autofocus (AF), once unreliable and unpredictable, is now extremely advanced. Most cameras feature multiple-area autofocus so that



Right—*The couple is spontaneous and completely unaware that they are being photographed by Mark Cafiero. The wealth of focal lengths available on state-of-the art DSLRs provides almost complete anonymity to the working photographer. (Canon EOS 1D Mark II; EF 70–200mm f/2.8L USM lens at 100mm; 1/3200 second at f/2.8; ISO 400)*

Below—*The accuracy of both the exposure-metering systems and predictive AF make the DSLR the only choice for capturing the fast-moving pace of today's weddings. Mark Cafiero made this image with a Canon EOS-1D Mark II N and EF 70–200mm f/2.8L USM at the 70mm setting. The exposure was 1/500 second at f/3.5 at ISO 320.*

The ability to isolate details within the frame and blow out background details into a soft pastel palette is uniquely the property of the 35mm DSLR and fast, very wide-aperture lenses. Note that just the couple's fingers are sharp in this delicate image. Photograph by Jessica Claire. (Canon EOS 20D; EF 85mm f/1.2L II USM; 1/320 second at f/2; ISO 400)

you can, with a touch of a thumbwheel, change the AF sensing area to one of four or five different areas of the viewfinder (the center and four outer quadrants). This allows you to "de-center" your images and create more dynamic compositions. Once accustomed to quickly changing the AF area, this feature becomes an extension of the photographer's process.

Using autofocus to photograph moving subjects used to be an almost insurmountable problem. While you could predict the rate of movement and manually focus accordingly, the earliest AF systems could not. Now, however, AF systems use a form of predictive autofocus, meaning that the system senses the speed and direction of the main subject's movement and re-

acts by tracking it. This is an ideal feature for wedding photojournalism, which is anything but predictable.

A relatively new addition to autofocus technology is dense multi-sensor area AF, in which an array of AF sensor zones (up to 51 [Nikon] or 45 [Canon] at this writing) are densely packed within the frame, making precision focusing much faster and more accurate. These AF zones are user-selectable or can all be activated at the same time for the fastest AF operation.

Instant Feedback. Perhaps the greatest advantage of shooting digitally is that when the photographer leaves the wedding, the images are already in hand. Instead of scanning the images when they are returned from the lab, the originals are already digital and ready to be imported into Photoshop for retouching or special effects and subsequent proofing and printing. The instantaneous nature of digital even allows photographers to put together a digital slide show of the wedding ceremony that can be shown at the reception, literally moments after events occur.

Instant feedback also frees you from constant anxiety over whether or not you "got" the shot. If you didn't get it, it's right there on the camera's large LCD screen. The image can be magnified and scrolled corner to corner on the LCD to inspect for sharpness and expression. There's almost no excuse for missing the moment.

ISO Settings. Another reason digital has become so popular with wedding photographers is that you can

The ability to shoot in very low light with relative assurance of success is the province of the 35mm DSLR system. This image, by Jessica Claire, was made at 0.8 second at f/9 handheld with an EOS 5D and EF 50mm lens. Jessica chose a relatively small aperture to provide the depth of field required to keep the striking mural on the wall sharp—as well as the nervous groom.

Many pros feel prime lenses offer advantages over zoom lenses. They consider them sharper and optimized for a single focal length. Here, Dan Doke used a Canon EF 24mm f/2.8 lens with his Canon EOS 1-D Mark II at an exposure of 1/3200 second at f/4.5 at ISO 800 to capture this one-of-a-kind shot.

change your ISO on the fly. For example, if you are shooting a portrait of the bride and groom before the ceremony and you are working outdoors in shade, you might select an ISO setting of 400. Then you might move to the church, where the light level would typically drop off by two or more f-stops. In this case, you would simply adjust the ISO to a higher setting, like 1600 (or faster), to compensate for the lower light levels. Unlike film, where you would have to change rolls or cameras to accomplish this, the selected ISO setting on a digital camera only affects the individual frame being recorded.

The latest generation of DSLRs, the Canon EOS 1-D Mark IV and the Nikon D3S boast incredible ISOs up to 102,400. I have inspected color images made at ISO 102,400 with these cameras and couldn't believe the minimal noise in the images; at that setting, the grain resembles Kodak Tri-X film.

Facing page (top)—*The range of digital zoom lenses designed for the smaller APS-C-sized image sensors is phenomenal. This image, made by Cherie Steinberg Coté, was made with a Nikon AF-S DX VR Zoom-Nikkor 18–200mm f/3.5–5.6G IF-ED lens at 18mm. A single lens such as this features an 11x zoom ratio, providing an amazing array of useable focal lengths. This image was made with a Nikon D300 by available light at ISO 250. The exposure was 1/200 second at f/6.3.*

Facing page (bottom)—*Los Angeles' cavernous Union Station provided the perfect test for the low-noise, high-ISO Nikon D700 DSLR. This image, made at ISO 1600 in RAW mode, is virtually noise-free. Inspect the highlight regions on the floor and the shadows on the bride's arm. Notice, too, the detail throughout the highlights, midtones, and shadows of the image—a function of perfect exposure and the chip's ability to render a long dynamic-range image with relative ease. Photograph by Cherie Steinberg Coté.*

Lenses

Zoom Lenses. Another reason that 35mm digital is the format of preference for wedding photojournalists is the

No, it's not a strictly photojournalistic shot (yes, it was set up), but the work of Bruce Dorn does have a pure cinematic feel to it—as if you just happened upon this unlikely scene. The image was shot with a Canon EF 70–200mm f/2.8L IS USM lens (at 115mm) and a Canon EOS 1D Mark II. As a long-time filmmaker, Bruce is more than a little familiar with working with fast, high-quality zoom lenses, which are regarded highly in the industry.

range of ultrafast and versatile zoom lenses available. The lens of choice seems to be the 80–200mm f/2.8 (Nikon) and 70–200mm f/2.8 (Canon and Nikon). These are very fast, functional lenses that offer a wide variety of useful focal lengths for both the ceremony and reception. They are internal-focusing, meaning that autofocus is lightning fast and the lens does not change length as it is zoomed or focused. At the shortest range, 70mm, this lens is perfect for full-length and three-quarter-length portraits. At the long end, 200mm, it is ideal for tightly cropped candid coverage or head-and-shoulders portraits. These zoom lenses also feature fixed maximum apertures that do not change as the focal length is varied. This is a prerequisite for any lens to be used in fast-changing conditions.

Facing page—*While not strictly a photojournalistic moment, it certainly is a great use of wide-angle lenses, in this case the Nikon AF Nikkor 24mm f/2.8D coupled to a Nikon D700. The 24mm provides a healthy dose of depth of field, thus tying the giant background poster to the couple in the foreground. A moderate aperture of f/6.3 was used to ensure both areas of the image were sharp. Photograph by Cherie Steinberg Coté.*

Prime Lenses. Fast fixed-focal-length (or prime) lenses (f/2.8, f/2, f/1.8, f/1.4, f/1.2, etc.) will get plenty of use on a wedding day, as they afford more "available light" opportunities than slower speed lenses. Any time the wedding photojournalist can avoid using flash, which naturally calls attention to itself, he or she will do so. So, the faster (wider) the maximum aperture of the lens, the more desirable the lens is to the wedding photojournalist.

Wide-Angles. Other popular lenses include the range of wide angles, both fixed-focal-length lenses and wide-angle zooms. Focal lengths from 10mm to 35mm

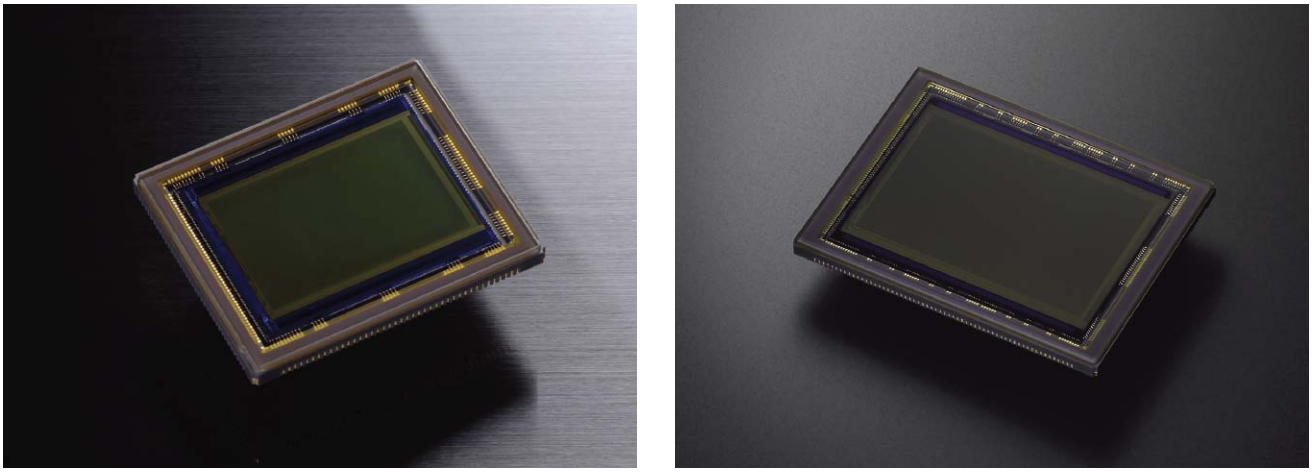
are ideal for capturing the atmosphere, as well as for photographing larger groups. These lenses are also fast enough for use by available light at moderate ISOs.

Telephotos. At the other end of the focal-length spectrum, many wedding photojournalists use ultrafast telephotos, like the 300mm f/2.8 or f/3.5 lenses. These lenses, while heavy, are ideal for working unobserved and can isolate some wonderful moments. Even more than the 70– or 80–200mm lens, the 300mm throws the backgrounds beautifully out of focus and, when used wide open, this lens provides a sumptuously thin band of focus, which is ideal for isolating details.

MIKE COLÓN'S APPROACH

Mike Colón uses prime lenses (not zooms) in his wedding coverage and shoots at wide-open apertures most of the time to minimize background distractions. He says, "The telephoto lens is my first choice because it allows me to be far enough away to avoid drawing attention to myself but close enough to clearly capture the moment. Wide-angle lenses, however, are great for shooting from the hip. I can grab unexpected moments all around me without even looking through the lens." Mike's favorite lens these days is the AF-S VR NIKKOR 200mm f/2G IF-ED prime lens from Nikon. It is blazingly fast and remarkably sharp and offers vibration reduction (VR) technology, which offers stability (lack of camera shake) equivalent to using a three-stops-faster shutter speed. Mike uses it when he 1) wants to be invisible to his subject and 2) wants to blur the background out by shooting wide open at f/2.

Armed with his Nikon D2X and Nikon 200mm f/2.0 AF-S VR, a remarkable piece of glass, Mike Colón positioned himself on a choir bench facing the oncoming bride and her dad. "I was standing so I could get the right angle to shoot directly between the heads of the groom and the pastor—they made a perfect frame," he says. Mike was thrilled at the result and the outpouring of emotion as the father worked to keep from losing his emotions and the bride is thrilled to see her husband and is already tearing up. The lens Mike was using incorporates VR technology, which allow the photographer to shoot at a longer than normal shutter speed without camera shake. The exposure was 1/60 second at f/2 at ISO 500.



A comparison between Nikon's DX- and FX-format sensors. The DX is an APS-C sized sensor, measuring 15.8x23.6mm. DX sensors are 1.5X smaller than the FX-format sensors and 35mm film, which both measure 24x36mm.

Another favorite lens is the 85mm (f/1.2L and f/1.8 for Canon; f/1.4 and f/1.8 for Nikon), a short telephoto with exceptional sharpness. This lens gets used frequently at receptions because of its speed and ability to throw backgrounds out of focus, depending on the subject-to-camera distance.

Focal Length and Chip Size. There are a number of full-fledged professional 35mm digital systems available with a full complement of lenses, flash units, and system accessories. Most of these cameras can be used with system lenses that a photographer may already own. The focal length, however, may not be the same, depending on the size of the camera's image sensor. If the image sensor is smaller than the 24x36mm film frame for which the lens was designed, the lens will function as a longer (more telephoto) lens. For example, the APS-C chip, which is smaller than a full 35mm film frame, changes the effective focal length of your existing lenses by a factor of 1.3x–1.5x. This is not usually a problem where telephotos and telephoto zooms are concerned, but when your wide-angles become significantly less wide on the digital camera body, it can be somewhat annoying.

There are a number of full-frame image sensors available in DSLRs (Nikon, Sony, and Canon). While the cost of production and manufacturing of full-size chips is higher than with the APS-C chips, they provide full frame coverage, so that your 17mm wide-angle continues to function as a 17mm wide-angle.

Some camera manufacturers who have committed to chip sizes that are smaller than full-frame 35mm have also started to introduce lens lines specifically geared to digital imaging. The circle of coverage (the area of focused light falling on the image sensor) is smaller to compensate for the smaller chip size. Thus, the lenses can be made more economically and smaller, while still offering the same wide range of focal lengths and lens speeds as the company's traditional lenses.

Flash

The wedding photojournalist must also be prepared for those times when the available light levels are too low to work without artificial light sources. Most of the top camera manufacturers also make a line of sophisticated TTL flash units, which can be used on-camera, in bounce mode, or off-camera as part of a multiple-flash TTL array. While very sophisticated, such flash units are quite simple to use and produce astonishingly accurate results.

On-Camera Flash. On-camera flash is used sparingly at weddings because of its flat, harsh light. As an alternative, many photographers use on-camera flash brackets, which position the flash over and away from the lens, thus minimizing flash red-eye and dropping

Flash can be bounced off the ceiling, a side wall, or a reflector. Once diffused in this way, it becomes a soft light source. Here, photographer Jim Garner bounced a remotely fired flash into a reflector for soft directional light. (Canon EOS 5D; EF 24-70mm f/2.8L USM lens; 1/100 second at f/2.8; ISO 800)

the harsh shadows behind the subjects—a slightly more flattering light. On-camera flash is often used outdoors, especially with TTL-balanced flash exposure systems. With such systems, you can adjust the flash output for various fill-in ratios, thus producing consistent exposures. In these situations, the on-camera flash is most frequently used to fill in the shadows caused by the daylight, or to match the ambient light output, providing direction to the light.

Off-Camera Flash. The same units used on-camera can be used off-camera and triggered with a radio-remote or by the camera's internal WiFi circuitry. Nikon, for example, uses its on-board Flash Commander mode to make the SB line of Nikon Speedlights off-camera flash units. A WiFi signal is emitted from the camera when the in-camera flash is used to trigger the off-camera flash. Off-camera SB Speedlights can be clustered in groups and set to fire at predetermined ratios to one another—a very sophisticated system that is relatively easy to master. Many photographers attach an SB unit to a monopod, creating a versatile lighting device that can be used for TTL bounce flash or direct flash, but from an overhead or side angle, producing a more dynamic light source. Such gear is being used quite frequently by today's wedding photographers to produce great quality light on location.

Bounce-Flash Devices. Many wedding photographers bounce their on-camera flash off the ceiling. This produces soft lighting, but it comes from high above the subject, which is rarely flattering. With high ceil-

ings, the problem is especially pronounced; the light comes from almost directly overhead.

A number of devices on the market have been created to address this problem. One is the Lumiquest ProMax system, which allows 80 percent of the flash's illumination to bounce off the ceiling or other reflective surface, while 20 percent is redirected forward as fill light. The system includes interchangeable white, gold, and silver inserts as well as a removable frosted diffusion screen. This same company also offers devices like the Pocket Bouncer, which enlarges and redirects light at a 90-degree angle from the flash to soften the quality of light and distribute it over a wider area. While no exposure compensation is necessary with TTL flash exposure systems, operating distances are somewhat reduced. With both systems, light loss is approximately 1⅓ stops. With the ProMax system, using the gold or silver inserts will reduce the light loss to approximately ⅔ stop.

Barebulb Flash. One of the less frequently used handheld flash units at weddings is the barebulb flash, such as Dyna-Lite's NE-1 flash, which provides 360-degree light coverage as well as a 1000 watt-second barebulb pencil-style flash tube. This great location tool is compact and lightweight and can literally fit in your pocket. These units are powerful and, instead of a reflector, use an upright mounted flash tube sealed in a plastic housing for protection. Since there is no housing or reflector, barebulb flash generates light in all directions. It acts more like a large point-source light than a small portable flash. Light falloff is also less than with other handheld flash units, and they are ideal for flash-fill situations.

These units are predominantly manual flash units, meaning that you must adjust their intensity by changing the flash-to-subject distance or by adjusting the flash output. Many photographers mount a series of barebulb flash units on light stands, using ball-head adapters to infinitely position the light in the reception for doing candids on the dance floor.

Studio Flash Systems. You may find it useful to have a number of studio flash heads with power packs and umbrellas. You can set these up for formals or tape the light stands to the floor and use them to light the reception. Either way, you will need enough power (at least 50–100 watt-seconds per head) to light large areas or produce smaller apertures at close distances.

High ceilings can negate the use of bounce flash. For this image, Jerry Ghionis opted to increase his ISO setting and shoot using only the available light. (Canon EOS 5D; EF 135mm f/2L USM lens; 1/100 second at f/3.2; ISO 800)

Mauricio Donelli takes studio strobes with stands (and assistants to position the lights for him) to every wedding. Here, he photographed the beautiful back of the gown with all its texture and elegance using a single softbox-mounted strobe that produced an aperture of f/16. No fill was used to create the dramatic falloff to black on the shadow side of the image.

The most popular of these type of lights is the monolight, which has a self-contained power pack and usually has an on-board photo cell, which will trigger the unit to fire when it senses a flash burst. All you need is an electrical outlet and the flash can be positioned anywhere. Be sure to take along plenty of gaffer's tape and extension cords. Tape everything in position securely to prevent accidents.

One such monolight, preferred by many wedding photographers, is the Dyna-Lite Uni400JR. This is a 3.5-pound compact 400 watt-second unit that can be plugged into an AC outlet or used with the Dyna-Lite Jackrabbit high-voltage battery pack. The strobe features variable power output and recycle times, full tracking quartz modeling light, and a built-in slave.

Studio flash units can be used with umbrellas for lighting large areas of a room. Be sure, however, that you "focus" the umbrella—adjusting the cone of light that bounces into and out of the umbrella surface by moving the umbrella closer and farther away from the light source until the umbrella is illuminated fully out to its perimeter. The ideal position is when the light fills the umbrella but does not exceed its perimeter. Focusing the umbrella also helps eliminate hot spots and maximize light output.

Lighting Accessories

Flashmeter. A handheld flashmeter is essential for work indoors and out, but particularly crucial when mixing flash and daylight. It is also useful for determining lighting ratios. A flashmeter will prove invaluable when using multiple strobes and when trying to determine the overall evenness of lighting in a large room or on a large group. Flashmeters are also ambient-light meters of the incident type, meaning that they measure the light falling on them and not light reflected from a source or object.

Remote Triggering Devices. If using multiple flash units, some type of remote triggering device will be needed to sync all the flashes at the instant of exposure. There are a variety of these devices available, but by far the most reliable is the radio-remote-triggering device. These devices use a radio signal that is transmitted when you press the shutter release and received by the individual receivers mounted on each flash. Radio remotes transmit signals in either digital or analog form.

Digital systems, like the Pocket Wizard Plus, are state of the art. Complex, 16-bit digitally coded radio signals deliver a unique code, ensuring the receiver cannot be triggered or "locked up" by other radio noise. The built-in microprocessor guarantees consistent sync speeds even under the worst conditions. As part of their standard equipment, some photographers include a

Bruce Dorn has no fear of mixing light sources. He might use hot lights and strobe in the same image, or he might use daylight and two different kinds of strobe in the image. When such variables exist, a digital flashmeter allows the ratios between light sources to be determined. It also makes it possible to determine the exact output of the light sources for a final exposure formula.

There are three light sources in this image by Jerry Ghionis: the light behind the mirror, the wall sconce, and the handheld video light illuminating the couple from just out of view of the mirror. All of these are tungsten light sources with slightly different color temperatures. Obviously, the photographer selected the white balance closest to normal for the bride and groom.

separate transmitter for as many cameras as are being used (for instance, an assistant's camera) as well as a separate transmitter for the handheld flash-meter, allowing the photographer to take remote flash readings from anywhere in the room.

Light Stands. Light stands are an important part of location lighting. You should use heavy-duty stands and always tape them firmly in place. Try to hide them in corners of the room. The light stands should be capable of extension to a height of twelve to fifteen feet. Lights should be aimed down and feathered so that their beams criss-cross, making the lighting as even as possible. The lights can be set to backlight the people at the reception, and an on-camera flash used to trigger the system.

Reflectors. When photographing by window light or outdoors, it is a good idea to have a selection of white, silver, gold, and black reflectors. Most photographers opt for the circular disks, which unfold to produce a large-size reflector. They are particularly valuable when making portraits by available light.

Backup and Emergency Equipment

Wedding photographers live by the expression "If it can go wrong, it will go wrong." That is why most seasoned pros carry backups and double backups—extra camera bodies and flash heads, extra transmitters, tons of batteries and cords, double the anticipated number of storage cards, and so on. In addition, if using AC-powered flash, extra extension cords, several rolls of duct tape (for taping cords to the floor), power strips, flash tubes, and modeling lights need to be backed up. An emergency tool kit is also a good idea.

3. PREPARATION AND THE WEDDING DAY

The wedding photojournalist's best weapon, so to speak, is preparedness. Knowing each phase of each couple's wedding day, when and where every event will happen, and the details of each mini-event during the day, will help build mutual confidence and rapport. It will also increase the percentage of successful shots that will be made.

The more time you spend with the bride and groom prior to the wedding, the more likely it is that you'll be able to plan for an amazing photograph like this. Photograph by Marcus Bell.

Meet with the Bride and Groom

Arrange a meeting with the couple at least one month before the wedding. Use this time to take notes, formulate detailed plans, and get to know the couple in a relaxed setting. This initial meeting also gives the bride and groom a chance to ask any questions they may have. They can tell you about any special pictures they want you to make, as well as let you know of any important guests that will be coming from out of town. Make notes of all the important names—the parents, the bridesmaids, the groomsmen, the best man, and the maid of honor—so that you can address each person by name. Note the color scheme, and get contact information for the florist, the caterer or banquet manager, the limo driver, the band, and so on.

Scout the Wedding Locations

Scheduling a pre-wedding meeting allows you a month to check out the locations and introduce yourself to the people at the various venues. As you do so, you may find out interesting details that will affect your timetable or how you must make certain shots.

When you meet with the minister, priest, or rabbi, make sure you ask about any special customs or tradi-

Here's a unique location that shows the ceremony and, in the background, the beautiful city of Boston. Dan Doke got lucky; the ceremony took place when the outside and inside illumination levels were pretty much the same. The image was shot at ISO 1000 and exposed for ¼ second at f/2.8 with an EF 16–35mm f/2.8L II USM lens. The people were lit by tungsten light at 2800K, so Dan changed the white balance of his EOS 1-Ds Mark II to the same color temperature, which, in turn, made the outside sky and water render as very blue in the final image.

tions that will be part of the ceremony. At many religious ceremonies you can move about and even use flash, but it should really be avoided in favor of a more discreet, available-light approach. Besides, available light will provide a more intimate feeling to the images. At some churches you may only be able to take photographs from the back, in others you may be offered the chance to go into a gallery or the balcony. In some cases, you may not be able to make pictures at all during the ceremony.

If you have not been there before, try to visit each venue at the same times of day that the wedding and reception will be held so that you can check the lighting, make notes of special locations, and catalog any potential problems you might foresee. Make detailed notes and sketches of the rooms and include information like the color and height of the ceiling, windows

***Facing page (top)**—The level of trust that the photographer builds with the bride and groom by repeated contact before the wedding is easily transferred to family members and members of the bridal party. As you can see, photographer Jim Garner has these boys' complete trust and cooperation.*

***Facing page (bottom)**—Visiting each venue, sometimes more than once and at different times of day, may uncover a perfect location. Jim Garner made the image with a Canon EOS 5D and EF 24–70mm f/2.8L USM lens. It was exposed in RAW mode for 1/8000 second at f/3.2 at ISO 400. In RAW file processing, the saturation was increased and a vignette applied.*

***Facing page**—Here's another great location that Jim Garner found and used throughout the couple's album.*

***Top right**—Choir lofts make great vantage points, especially for entrance or exit photos. Because they take the photographer out of the main action, consider having an assistant shoot these images from up above. Photograph by Jim Garner.*

***Bottom right**—Joel and Rita Wiebner made this lovely engagement portrait outdoors in open shade. The bride and groom were both looking up into the sky, which filled in the unflattering shadows that would have been created by the overhead lighting if they had their heads down. (Canon EOS 5D; EF 35mm f/1.4L USM; 1/250 second at f/1.4)*

and their locations, walls and wall coverings, and where tables and chairs will be positioned.

Look for locations for special pictures. For instance, if your couple has requested a big group portrait of all the family members and wedding party, then you might look for a high vantage point, such as a balcony over a courtyard. If you can't find such a location, you'll know you need to bring along a stepladder. The more of your shots and locations you can preplan, the smoother things will go on the wedding day.

Plan the Timing

You should determine how long it will take to drive from the bride's home to the ceremony. Inform the bride that you will arrive at her home (or hotel room—wherever she is getting ready for the ceremony) about an hour before she leaves. You should arrive at the ceremony venue at about the same time as or a little before the groom, who should arrive about a half-hour to forty-five minutes before the ceremony. At that time you can make portraits of the groom, groomsmen, and best man. Bridesmaids will arrive at about the same time. You should also determine approximately how long the ceremony will last.

Engagement Portraits

The process of creating an engagement portrait can play a significant role in forging a good relationship with the bride and groom. Since this one image is so important to establishing a good rapport between photographer and couple, many photographers include the engage-

ment portrait as part of their basic coverage. In other words, they don't charge extra for it.

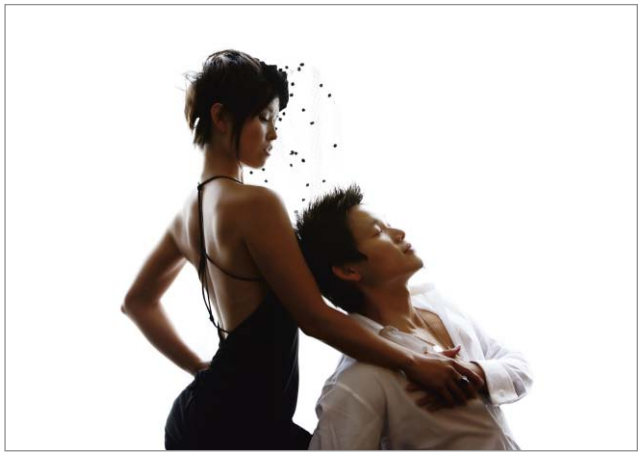
Once Alisha and Brook Todd book a wedding, they call the couple once a month to check in and see how they are doing. When the contract goes out to the cou-

GET INFORMATION ON THE VENDORS

Getting the names and addresses of the vendors can also be used to generate referrals. After the wedding, send each vendor a print (or a digitally printed card) of their specialty—a close-up of the floral display, an overview of the reception before the guests arrive, a place setting, a shot of the band, etc.—with a note of thanks. It is a special touch that can help cement you and your business in the minds of important wedding specialists.

Vendors take great pride in their work and appreciate a high-quality print of their efforts. It's good public relations for you as wedding photographer, as it often leads to referrals. Photograph by Dan Doke.

This is a fairly traditional engagement portrait done by Florida's Al Gordon. The idea is to convey the emotion between the couple using traditional posing methods and the coordination of outfits, if possible. Al likes to work at dusk, just after the sun has gone past the horizon.



This sensual image is a great example of the type of shot some couples love for an engagement portrait—even though, in this case, the couple was already married. Jerry Ghionis photographed fellow photographers Dave and Quin Cheung (from DQ Studios) against a white hotel-room curtain. There was a five-stop difference between the highlights and the skin tones, which Jerry metered for. The curtains, quite naturally, took care of themselves. The final touches—Quin placing her hand on her hip and Dave closing his eyes—made all the difference.

There are many touching stories occurring around the house or hotel room as the bride and groom are getting ready for the wedding. Photograph by Joel and Rita Wiebner. (Canon EOS 5D; EF 35mm f/1.4L USM; 1/500 second at f/1.4; ISO 800)

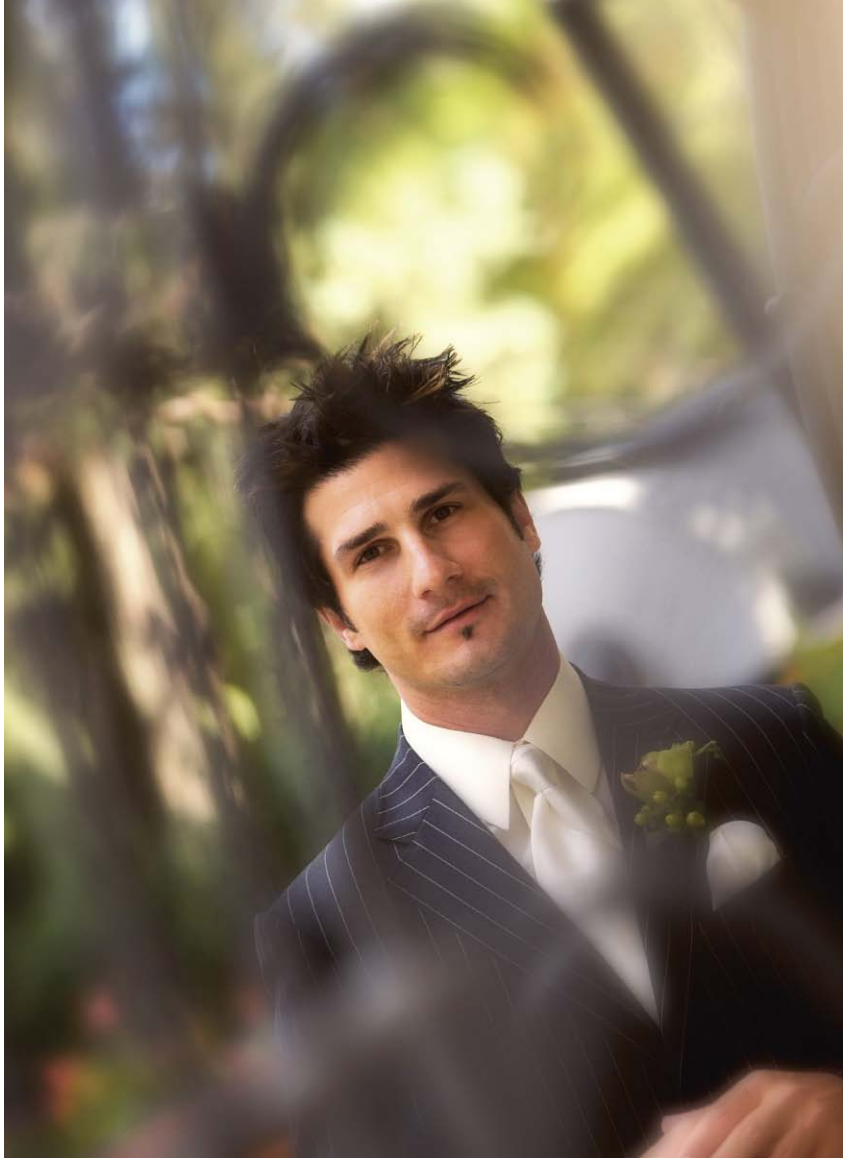
ple, they send a bottle of Dom Perignon with a handwritten note. They soon schedule the engagement portrait, which is a stylized romantic portrait of the couple made prior to the wedding day at the location of their choice. Once the wedding day arrives, they have spent quality time with the couple and have been in touch numerous times by phone and in person. "We really try to establish a relationship first," says Brook. "It's how we do business."

Many couples choose to use their engagement portrait for newspaper announcements, and often the photographer will produce a set of note cards using the engagement portrait. The couple can use these as thank-you notes after they return from the honeymoon (they can be delivered to the bride's mother before the wedding or while the couple is away).

Pre-Ceremony Coverage

The Bride. Generally, the actual wedding photography begins at the bride's home (or hotel room), as she is preparing for her big day. Some of the most endearing and genuine photographs of the day can be made at this time. By being a good observer and staying out of the way, you are sure to get some great shots, as everyone wears their emotions on their sleeves. Don't forget to include the maid of honor and/or the bride's mother, both of whom are integral to the bride's preparation.

It is important to look beyond photographic clichés (the bride gazing into the mirror as she gets ready, for example) and instead be alert for the unexpected moment. For the alert photographer, there is usually an abundance of good photo opportunities. Since the ceilings of most homes are quite low, and upstairs bed-



Above—*If you arrive early at the bride's home, use the time to create some detailed still lifes. This beautiful image of the bride's rings was taken by Marc Weisberg.*

Facing page, top left—*When Jeff and Julia Woods arrived at this bride's house, the parents gave them a guided tour of the home, relating many fond memories as they went. Julia decided it would be a great shot if she could include the proud father in the image as the bride descended the stairs. She used a Canon EOS 1-Ds Mark III and EF 16–35mm f/2.8L USM lens to incorporate the staircase, the chandelier, the bride, and her father in the photo.*

Facing page, top right—*It's essential to get some great portraits of the groom before the ceremony. This image was made by Jeff and Julia Woods with a Canon EOS 1-D Mark II and an EF 70–200mm f/2.8L USM lens set to 130mm. It was shot at f/3.2 to knock the foreground and background out of focus.*

Facing page, bottom—*This is a classic portrait of the bride getting ready. It was made by Denis and Regina Zaslavets. In these situations, you are reliant on window light and bounce flash. The technique here is excellent and so is the intensity of the bride's expression.*

rooms often have multiple windows, you can expect to expose these images either by bounce flash or available light.

During this process, tensions are high and you must tread lightly. Choose your moments and don't be afraid to step back and get out of the way once you have been admitted, which will usually be when the bride is almost ready. It is important not to wear out your welcome in the bride's home.

The Groom. Be prepared to depart from the bride's home in time to arrive at the ceremony at the same time as the groom. Photographing him before the ceremony will produce some wonderful shots—and it's a great time to create both formal and casual portraits of the groom and his groomsmen. Although he won't admit it, the groom's emotions will also be running high and this usually leads to some good-natured bantering between the groom and his friends.

If you have an assistant or are shooting the wedding as a team, you may decide to have your counterpart be

There are some truly wonderful shots that will occur as the participants make their way to the altar. Here, Joe Photo captured a unique and tender moment between these two. (Nikon D1X and AF Zoom Nikkor 80–200mm f/2.8D ED at 135mm)

prepared to handle the groom at the ceremony, while you finish up with the bride at her home.

Watch for Details. Before the ceremony is also a good time to capture many of the details of the wedding day. The flowers being delivered to the bride's home, for instance, can make an interesting image, as can many other accessories for the wedding-day attire. The groom's boutonniere is another stylish image that will enhance the album.

Photographing the Ceremony

Before the guests arrive, create an overall view of the church. No two weddings ever call for the same decorations, so it's important to document the couple's choices. If there is an overhead vantage point, like a choir loft, this is a good place to set up a tripod and make a long exposure with good depth of field so that everything is sharp. This kind of record shot will be important to the historic aspects of the wedding album.

The Bride's Arrival. When the bride arrives at the ceremony and is helped out of the car, sometimes by her dad, there are ample opportunities for good pictures. It isn't necessary to choreograph the event as there is plenty of emotion between the bride and her father. Just observe, be ready, and you will be rewarded with some priceless images.

The Procession. When the bridesmaids, flower girls, ring bearers, mother of the bride, and the bride herself (sometimes with her dad) come up the aisle, you should be positioned at the front of the church so that the participants are walking toward you. If you are working as part of a shooting team, you should have the other photographer(s) positioned elsewhere so that you can get multiple viewpoints of this processional.

The Ceremony. While the ceremony will present many emotion-filled moments, its sanctity is more im-

portant than the photographer or even the pictures, so show your respect for the event by working unobtrusively. Once the ceremony begins, you should be as discreet and invisible as possible, shooting from an inconspicuous or even hidden vantage point and working by available light. Often, a tripod will be necessary, as the exposures, even with a fast ISO setting, may be on the long side—like 1/15 second. Do be alert for surprises, though, and pay special attention to the children, who will do the most amazing things when immersed in a formalized ritual like a wedding ceremony.

For the ceremony, try to position yourself so that you can see the faces of the bride and groom, particularly the bride's face. This will usually place you behind the ceremony or off to the side. This is when high ISOs and fast, long lenses are really needed; you will almost surely be beyond the range of an 80–200mm zoom, one of the wedding photojournalist's most-often-used lenses. Look for the tenderness between the couple and the approving expressions of the best man and maid of honor. Too many times the photographer positions him- or herself in the congregation so that the person performing the ceremony is facing the camera. Quite honestly, the minister or rabbi will not be purchasing any photographs, so it is the faces of the bride and groom that you will want to see.

The Couple's Exit. If you are behind the officiant, of course, you cannot immediately bolt to the back of the church or synagogue to capture the bride and groom walking up the aisle as man and wife. This is when it is important to have a second shooter who can be in position to capture the bride and groom and all of

Visiting the venues before the ceremony will prepare you for where you can and cannot stand to get good shots during the ceremony. While it is best to shoot from behind the minister, here Emin Kuliyev captured the spirited minister at work. (Canon EOS 1Ds Mark III; EF 70–200mm f/2.8L USM at 155mm; 1/320 second at f/5.6; ISO 400)

the joy on their faces as they exit the church or synagogue for the first time as man and wife.

Be aware of changing light levels on these shots. Inside, the church will be at least three to four stops darker than the vestibule or entranceway. As the couple emerges toward daylight, the light will change drastically and quickly. Know your exposures beforehand and anticipate the change in light levels. Many a gorgeous shot has been ruined by the photographer not changing exposure settings to compensate for the increased light.

When photographing the bride and groom as they are leaving the church, include the door frame as a reference. If photographing from the side, try to position yourself on the bride's side, so she is nearest the camera.

In Western weddings, the exiting couple is showered with anything from rice to jelly beans—and, in this case, rose petals. Using a Canon EOS 1-D Mark II and a 1/2000 second shutter speed, photographers Jeff and Julia Woods froze the in-flight rose petals to produce a memorable image.

The ceremony itself is filled with emotion. This beautiful moment was photographed by Joe Photo with a Nikon D2X and AF DC-Nikkor 135mm f/2D lens.

Because of diminishing perspective, if the groom is in the foreground of your picture, the bride will look even smaller than she might be in reality—or she might be blocked from the camera view.

If there is to be a rice/confetti toss (or bubbles), these are best photographed with a wide-angle lens from close up, so that you can see not only the bride and groom, but also the confetti (rice or bubbles) and the faces of the people in the crowd. While the true photojournalistic purist would never choreograph a shot, many such successful shots have been made by working with the outdoor crowd so that they toss their confetti (or whatever) on your signal. Be sure to tell them to throw the stuff above the head height of the bride and groom so that it descends into your photograph. Give them a signal count—something like, "On three—one . . . two . . . three!" While it may be choreographed, it will look unstaged as the bride and groom

DON'T GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN THE EMOTION

Many photographers who love shooting weddings have told me that they sometimes get overwhelmed by the emotion of the event. This is easy to do, particularly if you relish the ritual and the tenderness of the wedding ceremony—in short, if you're a hopeless romantic. The best way to keep your emotions in check is to intellectually focus on every detail of the events around you. Immersing yourself in the flow of the wedding and its details and not in the emotion of the ceremony will help you to be more objective. Because it allows you to remain sensitive to all of the nuances, this mindset will not hinder your performance.

This is one of the more unusual cake-cutting shots you'll see. Emin Kuliyev photographed it with a Canon EOS 5D and EF 35mm f/1.4L USM lens at ISO 1600 (1/200 second at f/3.5). The interior strobe (camera right) was triggered remotely by the photographer.

will be unaware of your planning and will undoubtedly flinch when they see the rice/confetti in the air. This type of scene is best photographed with two photographers, both shooting cameras with high burst rates and using fast shutter speeds or strobe.

Photographing the Reception

For the bride and groom, the reception is such a whirlwind of activity that they usually see and remember very little of it. Therefore, they will depend on your pictures to provide them with priceless memories. You will want to photograph as many of the details and events of the reception as possible.

Your Approach. Photographing a reception calls upon all of your skills and instincts. Things happen quickly. Don't get caught with an important event coming up and only two frames left on your memory card. Use two camera bodies and always have plenty of exposures available—even if it means changing cards when they are not completely full. People are having a great time, so be cautious about intruding upon events. Watch the flow of the reception and carefully choose your vantage point for each shot. Coordinate your efforts with the wedding coordinator or banquet manager, whoever is in charge. He or she can run interference for you as well as cue you when certain events are about to occur, often not letting the event begin until you are ready.

The wedding photojournalist must learn to get shots without alerting the people being photographed. Some photographers walk around the reception with their camera held low, but with both hands in position on the camera so that they can instantly raise the camera to eye level, frame, and shoot. Still others will use a wide-angle lens prefocused at an intermediate distance like eight feet (or set to autofocus) and set to the proper ex-

posure settings. With the camera at waist or hip height, the photographer will wander around the reception, mingling with the guests. When a shot seems to be taking place, they will aim the camera up toward the people's faces and fire, never even looking through the viewfinder. It's a great way to get unobserved expressions. Autofocus and autoexposure modes will take care of the technical side of things and all the photographer has to do is concentrate on the action and the scene.

Room Overviews and Details. Before anyone enters the reception, you should make several good overviews of the decorated room. This should be done just before the guests enter, when the candles are lit and everything looks perfect. Be sure to photograph the details—table bouquets, place settings, name cards, etc., as these help enrich the finished wedding album.

The Key Players. The photographic opportunities at the reception are endless. As the reception goes on and guests relax, the opportunities for great pictures will increase. Be aware of the bride and groom at all times, as they are the central players. Fast zooms and high ISO settings will give you the best chance to work unobserved.

Scheduled Events. Be prepared for the scheduled events at the reception—the bouquet toss, removing the garter, the toasts, the first dance, and so on. If you have done sufficient preparation, you will know where and when each of these events will take place and you will have prepared to light and photograph them. Often, the reception is best lit using a number of corner-mounted umbrellas, triggered by an on-camera flash on rapid remote. That way, anything within the perimeter of your lights can be photographed by strobe. Be certain you meter various areas within your lighting perimeter so that you know what your exposure will be everywhere within the reception area.

The reception will be full of surprises. It's good to be prepared and have a chair or stepladder to stand on—or in this case, hold the camera above your head and fire away. Photograph by Joe Photo. (Nikon D2X; AF Fisheye-Nikkor 16mm f/2.8D lens; Nikon Speedlight fired from camera position; 1/30 second at f/2.8; ISO 800)

This is a great image of the father of the bride and his daughter. Two remote flash units were used: a raw flash directly behind the couple and a diffused, off-camera flash to camera left. The skin tones were warmed in postproduction to match the warm ambience of the room. Photograph by Jeff and Julia Woods.

Cutting the Cake. One of the key shots at the reception is the cutting of the wedding cake. This is often a good opportunity to make an overhead group shot of the crowd surrounding the bride and groom. Bring along a stepladder for these types of shots. A second shooter is a good idea in these situations so that details and priceless moments won't be missed. (*Note:* Be sure to get a still life of the cake before it is cut. Both the couple and the baker/caterer will want to see a beautiful shot of their creation.)

The First Dance. The first dance is another important moment in the reception, and one that you will want to document thoroughly. Don't turn it into a cliché. Just observe the interactions and you will be rewarded with emotion-filled, joyful moments. Try to use multiple shooters so you don't miss the good expressions.

The Bouquet Toss. The bouquet toss is one of the more memorable shots at any wedding reception. Whether you're a photojournalist or traditionalist, this shot always looks best when it's spontaneous. You need plenty of depth of field, which almost always dictates a wide-angle. You'll want to show not only the bride but also the expectant faces in the background. Although

Facing page, top left—*One of the key shots is the bouquet toss. It should be a fun shot and will require flash—in this case, camera-mounted diffused flash. The photographers dragged the shutter so that the strobe output would match the room light (1/60 second at f/2.8). The camera, an EOS 20D was set to automatic white balance so the light of the strobe was correctly color balanced. Photograph by Denis and Regina Zaslavets.*

Facing page, top right—*Believe it or not, the bride and groom rarely get a chance to kiss on their own wedding day. Marc Weisberg makes sure that this shot is part of his coverage.*

Facing page, bottom—*Marc Weisberg is fond of wedding cakes and always makes beautiful still lifes of the cake—or, in this case, a triptych of three wedding cakes.*

Details of the wedding day opulence are a great idea, especially for spicing up the album. Photograph by Marc Weisberg.

you can use available light, the shot is usually best done with two flashes—one on the bride and one on the ladies hoping to catch the bouquet. Your timing has to be excellent, as the bride will often "fake out" the group (and you), just for laughs. Try to get the bouquet as it leaves the bride's hands and before it is caught. If your flash recycles fast enough, get a shot of the lucky lady who catches it, too. Of course, if you have enough light to shoot this scene by available light, then blast away.

Leaving the Reception. The final shot of the day will be the couple leaving the reception, which is usually a memorable photo. Like so many events at the reception, planned and spontaneous, it is best to have as many angles of the event as possible, which is why so many wedding photojournalists work with a shooting partner or assistants.

Lighting. *Pole Lighting.* Many photographers employ an assistant at the reception to walk around with a barebulb flash attached to a monopod. The strobe is slaved and can be triggered by a radio transmitter on the camera or by an on-camera flash. The pole light can be positioned anywhere near the subjects and can be set to overpower the on-camera flash by one or two f-stops so that it becomes the main light. Your assistant should be well versed in the types of lighting you like to create with this rig. For instance, if he or she is at a 45-degree angle to the subject and the light is held about four feet over the subject's head height, the resulting lighting will resemble Rembrandt-style portrait lighting. If you prefer to backlight your subjects, then your assistant can position himself behind the group to create a rim lighting effect.

Videographers' Lighting. If a wedding video is being produced, you will have the luxury of the videographer rigging and lighting the reception hall with hot lights—usually quartz halogen lights, which are very bright and will make your reception photography much easier. The only problem is that you will have to color correct each

TABLE SHOTS

Table shots are the bane of every wedding photographer's existence. They rarely turn out well, are almost never ordered, and are tedious to make. If your couple absolutely wants table shots, ask them to accompany you from table to table. That way they can greet all of their guests, and it will make the posing quick and painless. You might also consider talking the couple into one big fun group that encompasses nearly everyone at the reception. These are always fun to participate in and to photograph.

scene. A way to get around that is to use the camera's automatic white balance setting and, if necessary, adjust the color balance again in RAW file processing.

You can also carry your own videographer's light, either 50W or 100W, for the reception and formal portraits. In situations where there isn't enough light (or good light in general), this light adds a kiss of golden illumination to the subject, which is very appealing. The most popular such lights are the Lowell ilights.

Rings

The bride and groom usually love their new rings and would surely like a shot that includes them. A close-up of the couple's hands displaying their new rings makes a great detail image in the album. You can use any type of attractive pose, but remember that hands are difficult to pose. If you want a really close-up image of the rings, you will need a macro lens, and you will probably have to light the scene with flash, unless you make the shot outdoors or in good light.

Little Ones

One of the best opportunities for great pictures comes from spending some time with the smallest attendees and attendants—the flower girls and ring bearers. They are thrilled with the pageantry of the wedding day, and their involvement often offers a multitude of picture opportunities.

The flower girl was first a member of the bridesmaids portrait, but when Cherie Steinberg Coté noticed how adorable she was, she became the portrait. From your initial idea for the picture, more and better opportunities are sometimes born.

4. COMPOSITION AND DESIGN

Good composition is little more than proper subject placement within the frame. Good design is a logical and pleasing arrangement of the elements within the photograph. The combination of good composition and design is crucial for creating vivid, dynamic images (and album-page layouts, as covered in chapter 7).

The Rule of Thirds

Even many accomplished photographers don't really know where to place the subject within the frame, leaving it to be a consequence of good timing, observation, and instinct. As a result, subjects can often end up dead-center in the picture. This is the least dynamic subject placement you can produce.

The easiest way to improve your compositions is to use the rule of thirds. To apply this rule, mentally divide the rectangular area of the viewfinder into nine separate zones using a tic-tac-toe grid. The point at which any two lines intersect is an area of visual interest—an ideal spot to position your main point of interest. The main point of interest does not necessarily have to fall at an intersection of two lines, however; it could also be placed anywhere along one of the dividing lines.

This image by Michael Greenberg utilizes small and large areas of the frame in opposing quadrants of thirds. The subjects (the bride and groom, pictured in the rear-view mirror) are small, while the limo driver's hands and interior of the car are prominent. The car was lit by daylight; the couple was lit by off-camera flash aimed over the photographer's shoulder. The image was made with a 17mm lens and Nikon Speedlight at an exposure of 1/50 second at f/5.6.

Right—*In this lovely portrait of a bride on the streets of Nantucket, Claudia Kronenberg composed the bride off-center and captured her gazing to her right, as if smiling to an admirer across the street. By putting more room in the direction the bride is looking, Claudia not only created a dynamic composition using the rule of thirds, but also gave the image a sense of direction and movement. Claudia used a Nikon D2X and an AF Nikkor ED 180mm f/2.8D IF lens at 1/320 second at f/3.2, which caused the background to softly blur at the wide aperture.*

Below—*The S shape of the bride is highly apparent in this image by Stuart Bebb, especially since all the horizontal and vertical lines are aligned perfectly so that the S shape contrasts and opposes the straight lines. Because of the two contrasting modes, the image has its own unique sense of tension and balance, heightening the visual interest of the photograph.*

Many professional camera systems offer interchangeable viewfinder screens. One such screen is a grid screen, which cuts the frame into thirds, vertically and horizontally, and greatly facilitates off-center positioning of the subject. The newer professional DSLRs offer an electronic frame grid that you can apply and remove at any time.

Direction

Regardless of which direction the subject is facing in the photograph, there should be slightly more room in front of the person. For instance, if the person is looking to the right as you look at the scene through the viewfinder, then there should be slightly more space to the right side of the subject than to the left of the subject in the frame. This gives a visual sense of direction.

Even if the composition is such that you want to position the person very close to the center of the frame, there should still be slightly more space on the side toward which the subject is turned. This principle still applies even when the subject is looking directly at the camera. He or she should not be centered in the frame, and there should be slightly more room on one side or the other to enhance the composition.

Pleasing Compositional Forms

The S-shaped composition is perhaps the most pleasing of all compositions. In this type of image, the center of interest usually falls on or near a rule-of-thirds line, but the remainder of the composition forms a sloping S shape that leads the viewer's eye to the center of main interest. Another pleasing type of composition is the L shape or inverted-L shape, a composition that is ideal for reclining or seated subjects.

These compositional forms, as well as the Z shape and C shape, are used not only in the design of individual photographs, but as we'll see in chapter 7, in the formation of cohesive and visually stimulating album-page layouts. Shapes in compositions provide visual motion. The viewer's eye follows the curves and angles and travels logically through the shape, and consequently, through the photograph.

Subject shapes can be contrasted or modified with additional shapes found either in the background or foreground of the image. The "lead-in line," for example, is like a visual arrow, directing the viewer's attention toward the subject (we'll talk more about lines on page 67).

A bride sits at a New England neighborhood café, lost in her thoughts. The photographer, Claudia Kronenberg, liked the way the reflections seem to mirror the "far away" nature of this image.

***Facing page**—Because of the slow shutter speed and the diagonal orientation of the image, the bride seems to be moving rapidly toward the camera. Creating motion in a specific direction within the photo is one of the major tricks in building visual interest in the image. Photograph by Marcus Bell.*

Subject Tone

The rule of thumb is that light tones advance visually, while dark tones retreat. Therefore, elements in the picture that are lighter in tone than the subject can be distracting. Bright areas, particularly at the edges of the photograph, should be darkened either in printing, in Photoshop, or in the camera (by vignetting) so that the viewer's eye is not led away from the main subject.

The exception to this occurs in portraits where the subject is the darkest part of the scene, such as in a high-key portrait with a white background. This is really the same principle at work as above; the eye will go to the region of greatest contrast in a field of white or on a light-colored background. Regardless of whether the subject is light or dark, it should dominate the rest of the photograph either by brightness or by contrast.

Focus

Whether an area is in focus or out of focus greatly impacts the amount of visual emphasis it receives. For instance, a subject may be framed in green foliage, yet part of the sky is visible in the scene. The eye would ordinarily go to the sky first. But if the sky is soft and out of focus, the eye will revert back to the area of greatest contrast—hopefully the face. The same is true of foreground areas. Although it is a good idea to make them darker than your subject, sometimes you can't. If the foreground is out of focus, however, it will detract less from a sharp subject.

Similarly, rendering various portions of the face in and out of focus can present a visual treat. Photographers will often shoot with the fastest lens they own (f/1.2 or f/1.4) at close distances to create startlingly

Fernando Basurto created this joyous portrait of a bride in the midst of a spontaneous self-celebration. Notice the beauty of the unifying shapes in this image—the triangle of her wedding gown mirrored by the "V" created by her outstretched arms. All of these nice diagonal lines are safely enclosed in a box of verticals and horizontals close to the frame edges.

Two square shapes mimic each other in this composition. Each square contains a different story unfolding. The stories, as well as the shapes, play off of each other in an unusual way. Straight and diagonal lines are also prominent in this award-winning image by Marcus Bell.

thin bands of focus. Additionally, the ability to create defocused areas of a scene in Photoshop has added to the popularity of selective focus.

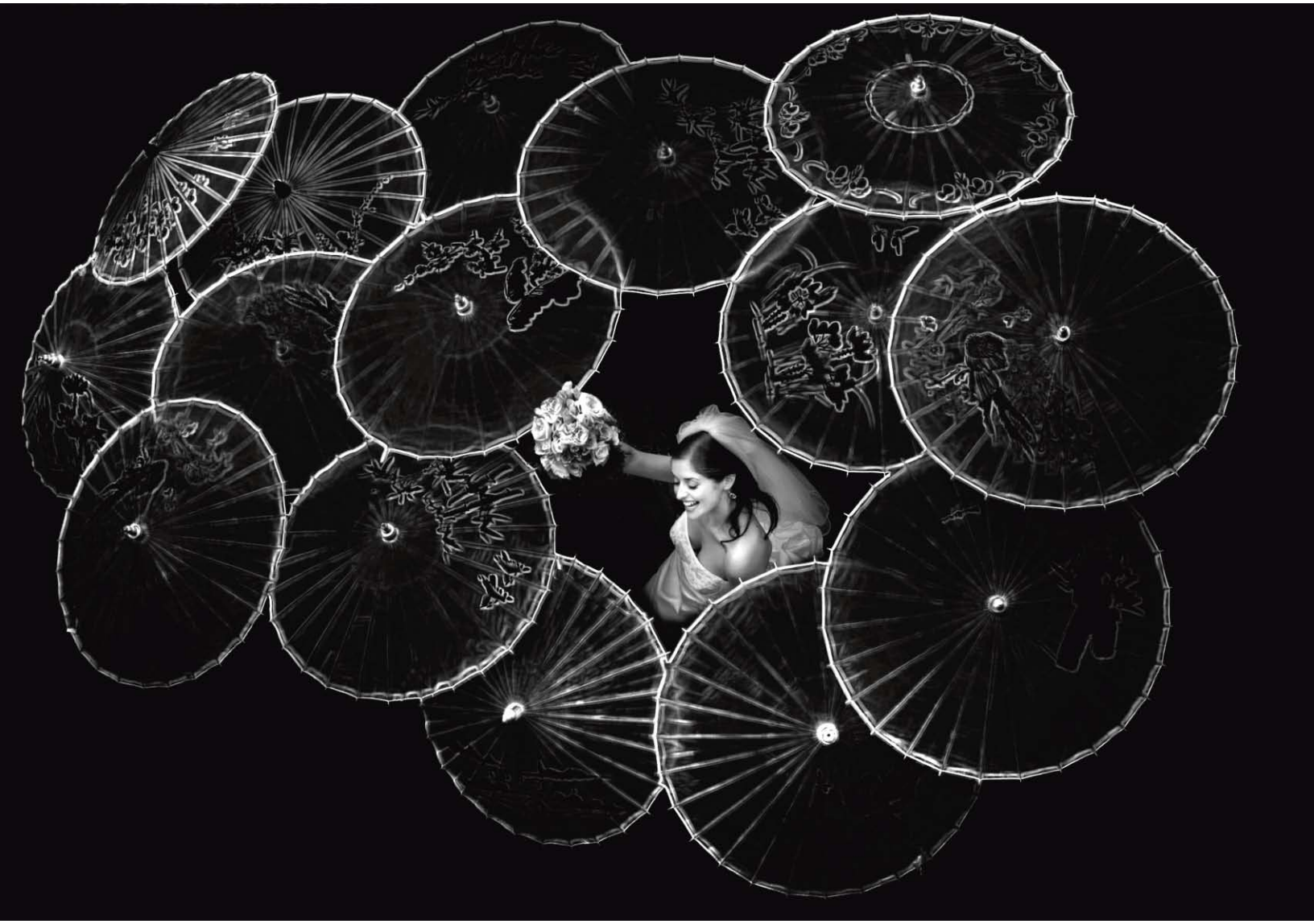
Creative control of focus is a way of riveting attention on a singular trait of your subject. Whether it is done conventionally or in Photoshop, it can be quite effective.

Lines

To master composition, the photographer must be fluent in all the elements of artistic creation, including both real and implied lines within the photograph. A real line is one that is obvious—a horizon line, for example. An implied line is one that is not as obvious, like the curve of the wrist or the bend of an arm. Further, an implied line may jump from shape to shape, spurred by the imagination to take the leap.

Real lines should not intersect the photograph in halves. This splits the composition into two separate photos. It is better to locate real lines at a point that is one-third into the photograph. This creates a pleasing imbalance—the photo is "weighted" to the top or bottom, left or right.

Lines, real or implied, that meet the edge of the photograph should lead the eye into the scene and not out of it, and they should also lead toward the subject. A good example of this is the country road that is widest in the foreground and narrows to a vanishing point on



The reception was scheduled almost immediately after the marriage ceremony, so Yervant had very little time to take the wedding party portraits. "I had to think fast and come up with something both artistic and spectacular," he said. "The only common components among the fifteen bridesmaids were the Asian umbrellas they used to keep themselves cool under the hot sun," he says. "They were very pretty and colorful, and they made beautiful images, but I felt that a well-crafted, black-and-white image would have an even stronger impact than color—especially if I finished it in my signature black-and-white art style." And this is what he did, using his own Photoshop Action set called Yervant B&W.

the horizon, where the subject is walking. These lines lead the eye straight to the subject—and, in fact, resemble a pyramid, one of the most compelling visual shapes.

Shape

Shape is nothing more than a basic geometric form found within a composition. Shapes are often made up of implied and/or real lines. For example, a classic way of posing three people is in a triangle or pyramid shape. In any good portrait, the lines and positioning of the body, specifically the elbows and arms, create a triangular base for the composition. Shapes, while more dominant than lines, can be used similarly in unifying and balancing a composition.

Shapes often come into play in composing group portraits, in which small numbers of people are com-

posed to form a unified portrait. Sometimes, in these instances, shapes may be linked, having a common element in both groups. For example, two groups of three people in pyramid shapes can be linked by a person in between.

The number of possibilities is infinite, involving shapes and linked shapes and even implied shapes, but the point of this discussion is to be aware that these shapes and lines are the prevalent tools used in the design of well-composed images, and that they are vital tools in creating strong visual interest within an image. Many professional photographers have told me that they were largely unaware of the role of contrasting or complementary shapes within the design of a photograph. While this is not a psychoanalytical profile, suffice to say that when photographers who are fluent in the language of design find and successfully integrate design elements, it can literally be an unrecognized aspect of their photography.

Tension and Balance

Just as real and implied lines and real and implied shapes are vital parts of an effectively designed image, so are the "rules" that govern them—the concepts of tension and balance. Tension is a state of imbalance in an image—a big sky and a small subject, for example, is a situation having visual tension. Balance is where two items, which may be dissimilar in shape, create a har-

This is a beautiful example by Yervant of tension and balance in the same image. The composition is symmetrical—the bride centered between two touching bridesmaids, and dynamic—it is off-center, built on a diagonal line caused by tilting the camera toward the diagonal. The bride's pose is dynamic and charming, forming an S-shaped curve in the center of the image.

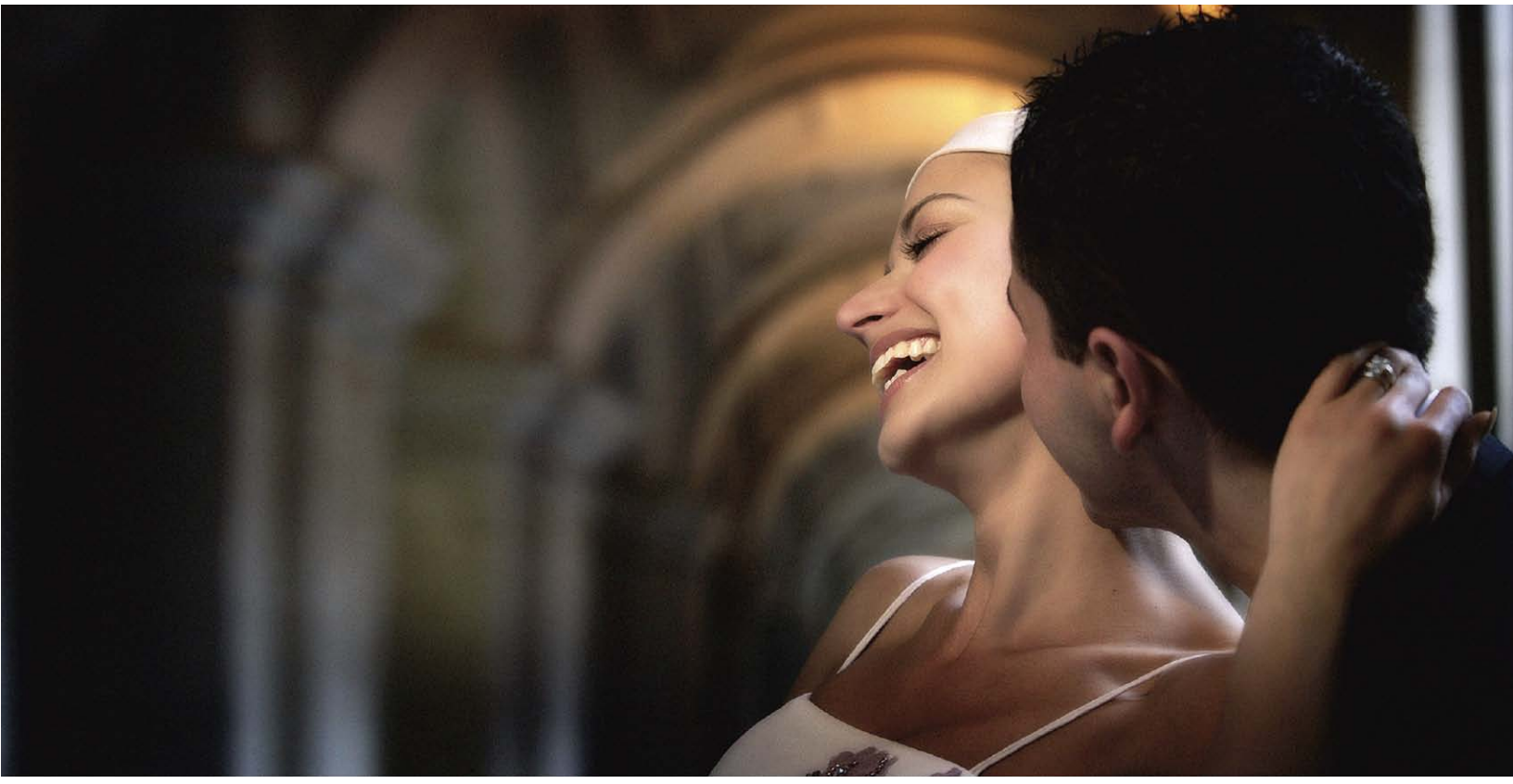
Sometimes the action is fast and spontaneous; all that even the best the photographer can hope to do is set the basic settings for flash and camera exposure and hope for the best. That's what Michael Greenberg did when this troop decided to toss the groom into the air. Michael metered for the room light and synchronized his TTL flash exposure to balance with it. He held the camera and flash over his head and fired off a few frames hoping for the best! The result is a groom who looks like a superhero flying through the air. (Nikon D2X; 10.5mm f/2.8 fisheye; 1/20 second at f/4)

mony in the photograph because they have more or less equal visual strength.

Although tension does not have to be "resolved" within an image, it works side by side with the concept of balance so that, in any given image, there are elements that produce visual tension and elements that produce visual balance. This is a vital combination of artistic elements because it creates a sense of heightened visual interest. Think of it as a musical piece with varying degrees of harmony and discord coming together to create a pleasing experience.

Tension can be referred to as visual contrast. For example, a group of four children on one side of an image and a pony on the other side of the image would seemingly produce visual tension. They contrast each other because they are different sizes and they are not at all similar in shape. But the photograph may still be in a state of perfect visual balance. For instance, these two different groups could be "resolved" visually if the larger group (the children) was wearing bright clothes and the pony was dark colored. The eye then sees the two units as equal—one demanding attention by virtue of size, the other demanding attention by virtue of brightness.

The horizontals and verticals in this image are architecturally perfect. In the face of all that symmetry, though, you have the off-center couple composed of anything but vertical and horizontal lines. This is what makes this image so compelling, the contrast between straight and crooked. Photograph by Yervant.



Here is another example where the photographer intentionally offset the couple and allowed the dynamic vaulted arches to balance the couple compositionally. Photograph by Yervant.

5. POSING FOR "FORMALS"

Even as a wedding photojournalist, there are a number of formals that must be made at every wedding. These are posed, controlled portraits in which the subjects are well aware of the camera. When creating these, the principles of good posing and composition are essential. For those times (and because any good wedding photographer not aware of the traditional rules of posing and composition is deficient in his or her education) the basics are included here.

In any photojournalistic wedding coverage, up to 15 percent of the images may be groups and formals. Gatherings of this type bring together people from the

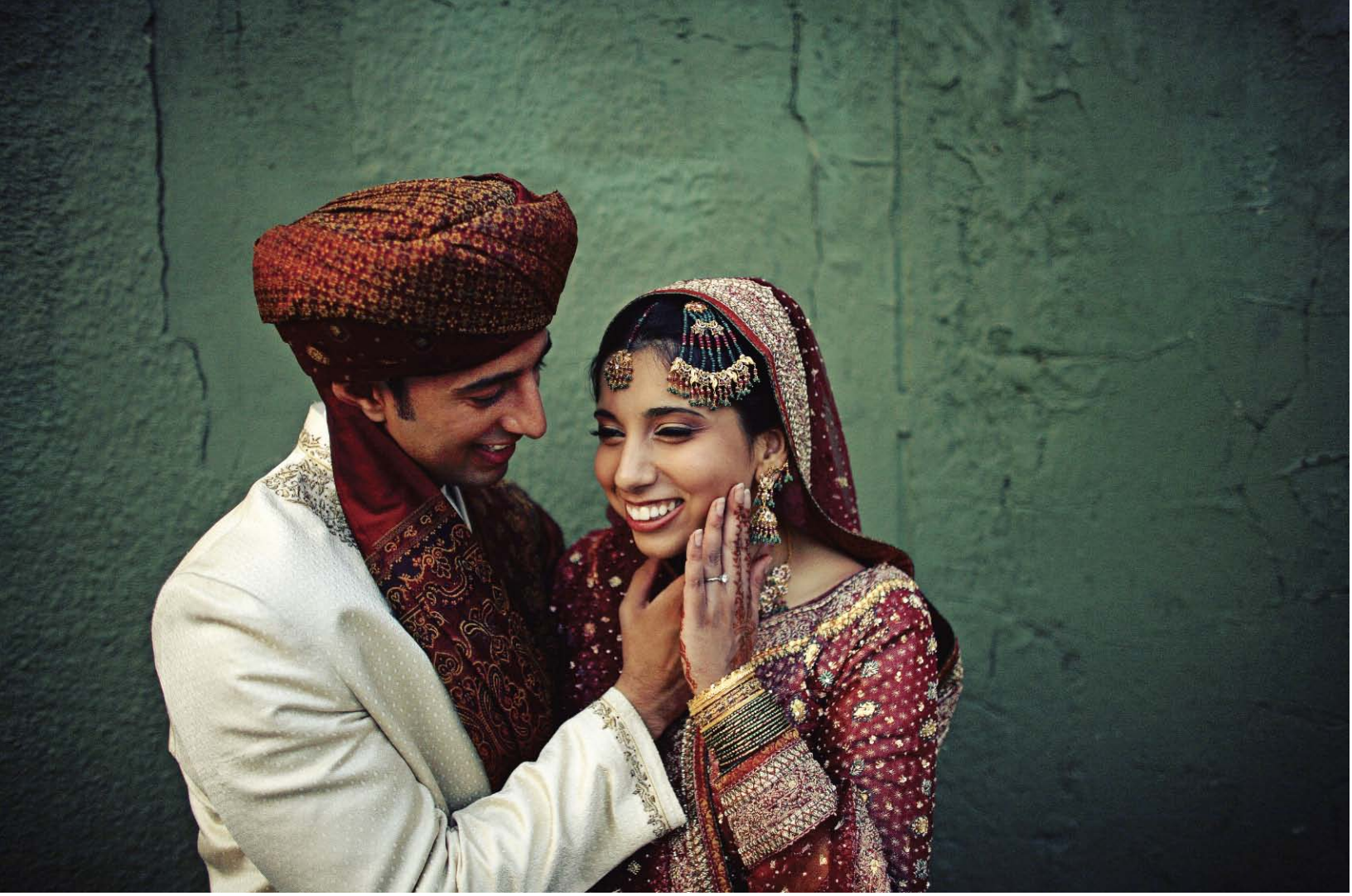
Here is a formal portrait of a candlelit bride that breaks a number of consistent posing rules. Instead of leaning forward, sitting on the edge of chair, the bride is all the way back in the chair, her weight shifted back so that the pose actually adds size to her thighs. But because the bride is "model" thin, there are no ill effects. The portrait uses candlelight, but that is not really the source of illumination; a hot light at head height (to camera left) actually illuminated the full set and bride. Note the lack of grain in this ISO 1600 image made with a Nikon D700 and AF Nikkor 35mm f/2.8. Photograph by Cherie Steinberg Coté.

Cherie Steinberg Coté used good posing technique in this formal portrait of the groom and groomsmen. There is an air of relaxation and everyone looks great. Notice how well the hands are posed; showing either one hand or no hands at all simplifies things greatly. The photograph was made at 1/60 second at f/8 with a raised hot light illuminating the gentlemen. The background was underexposed by about two stops to darken it to a dusk-like reading.

couple's lives who may never be assembled together again, so it is imperative that pictures be made to commemorate the event. Also, brides and families want to have a formal remembrance of the day, which may include the formal portraits of bride alone, groom alone, bride and groom together, bride and bridesmaids, groom and groomsmen, full wedding party, family of the bride, family of the groom, and so on. These images are something that almost every couple expects the photographer to make on the day of their wedding. (*Note:* Group portraits will be treated in further detail in chapter 6.)

As you will see, however, the "formals" done by a contemporary wedding photojournalist differ greatly from the stiff "boy–girl, boy–girl" posing of the traditional wedding photographer, where everyone is looking directly into the camera lens. So much imagination goes into the making of these images—preserving a look of naturalness and spontaneity that is in keeping with the photojournalistic spirit—that it's often impossible to tell that the photographer actually staged the moment.

Most importantly, the fact that these pictures are posed and highly controlled doesn't seem to diminish their popularity among brides. The images have a certain style and elegance, regardless of whether or not the subjects are "looking into the camera." (Notably, however, the wedding-photojournalism purists have somewhat cynically termed this approach to photography "faux-tojournalism.")



This uncharacteristic formal portrait of bride and groom is by Jesh de Rox, whose sole aim is to release the emotion of any situation. Here he captured a lovely couple enjoying their day and themselves. The bright green wall adds a serenity to the image that is quite pleasing.

Posing Principles

Although the rigors of formal posing will not be seen in these photos, a knowledge of posing fundamentals will increase the likelihood of capturing people at their best. No matter what style of photography is being used, there are certain posing essentials that need to be implemented, otherwise your technique (or lack of it) will be obvious. The more you know about the rules of posing and composition, and particularly the subtleties, the more refined and flattering your wedding images will be. And the more you practice these principles, the more they will become second nature and a part of your overall technique.

The Head and Shoulders. One of the basics of good portraiture is that the subject's shoulders should be turned at an angle to the camera. With the shoulders square to the camera, the person looks wider than he or she really is. Simultaneously, the head should be turned a different direction than the shoulders. This provides an opposing or complementary line within the photograph; when seen together with the line of the body, this creates a sense of tension and balance. With men, the head is often turned the same general direction as the shoulders (but not exactly the same angle), but with women, the head is usually turned toward the near shoulder for the classic "feminine" pose.

Face Positions. The face should be viewed from an angle; this is generally much more attractive than a full-face portrait. There are three basic head positions (relative to the camera) in portraiture. With all of these

head poses, the shoulders should be at an angle to the camera.

The Seven-Eighths View. If you consider the full face as a head-on "mug shot," then the seven-eighths view is produced when the subject's face is turned just slightly away from camera. In other words, you will see a little more of one side of the subject's face. Usually, you will still see both of the subject's ears in a seven-eighths view.

The Three-Quarters View. This is when the far ear is hidden from the camera and more of one side of the face is visible. With this pose, the far eye will appear smaller because it is farther away from the camera than the near eye. It is important when posing subjects in a three-quarters view to position them so that the smaller eye (people usually have one eye that is slightly smaller than the other) is closer to the camera. This way both eyes appear, perspective-wise, to be the same size in the

This is a beautiful formal portrait of the bride in which she has been offset to the far left of the frame to allow the beams of light on the wall to balance the composition. She is in a three-quarters view, approaching a profile. The light is vintage Rembrandt lighting (note the diamond-shaped highlight on her near cheek). The line of her eyes follows the line of her near shoulder for a wonderful dynamic element. Note, too, that the photographer had her move her left elbow out from her body and slide her left hand forward to produce a space under her arm, which not only produces a delicate triangular shape but also slims the arm and helps provide a base for the composition. Photograph by Jim Garner.

This is an intriguing group portrait by Jim Garner. Notice that the composition has a natural arch to it and that Jim only shows three hands in the composition. The veil provides an overlay of dynamic lines, starting with the bride's fingers on the veil. To keep the depth of field shallow, the photographer made the image at 1/3200 second at f/2.8 with an EF 70–200mm L USM lens on a Canon EOS 1-Ds Mark III. The spontaneity and fun are results of the photographer creating a moment for the subjects to act silly.

photograph. It is important to note that you do not have the luxury of much time in posing groups of people at a wedding, but when photographing the bride and groom, care should be taken to notice all of the subtleties.

The Profile View. In the profile, the head is turned almost 90 degrees to the camera. Only one eye is visible. When photographing profiles, adjust your camera position so that the far eye and eyelashes disappear.

Knowing the different head positions will help you provide variety and flow to your images. In group portraits, you may need to incorporate more than one of the head positions. At times, you may end up using all three head positions in a single group pose. The more people you have in the group, the more likely that becomes.

The Gaze. The direction the person is looking is important. If the subject is aware of your presence, start by having the person look at you. If you step away slightly and engage your subject in conversation, allowing you to hold the subject's gaze, you will create a slight rotation to the direction of the face. You can also have the person look away from you until you best utilize the light and flatter your subject. One of the best ways to

enliven the subject's eyes is to tell an amusing story. If they enjoy it, their eyes will smile—one of the most endearing expressions that people can make.

One of the best photographers I've ever seen at "enlivening" total strangers is Ken Sklute. In almost every image he makes, the people are happy and relaxed in a natural, typical way. Nothing ever looks posed in his photography—it's almost as if he happened by this beautiful picture and snapped the shutter. One of the ways he gets subjects "under his spell" is his enthusiasm for the people and for the excitement of the day. His positive attitude is contagious, and his affability translates into attentive, happy subjects.

The Arms. The arms should not be allowed to fall to the subject's sides, but should project slightly outward to provide gently sloping lines and a triangular base for the composition. This is achieved by asking the subjects to move their arms away from their torsos. Remind them that there should be a slight space between their upper arms and their torsos. This triangular base in the composition visually attracts the viewer's eye upward, toward the face.

The Hands. Hands can be strong indicators of character, just as the mouth and eyes are. However, hands are very difficult to photograph; in many portraits, they are closer to the camera than the subject's head and thus appear unnaturally large. One thing that will give hands a more natural perspective is to use a longer lens than normal (an 80–200mm in the 35mm format). Although holding the focus on both the hands and the face is more difficult with a longer lens, the size relationship between them will appear more natural. If the hands are slightly out of focus, it is not as crucial as when the eyes or face of the portrait are soft.

One should avoid photographing a subject's hands pointing straight into the camera lens. This distorts the size and shape of the hands. Always have the hands at an angle to the lens and, if possible, try to bend the wrist to produce a gentle sloping line. When possible, photograph the outer edge of the hand. This produces a natural, flowing line and eliminates distortion. As generalizations go, it is important that the hands of a woman have grace and the hands of a man have strength.

The Feet. Another basic rule of thumb is that no one should be standing at attention, both feet together. Instead, the front foot should be brought forward slightly. The subject's weight should generally be on the back leg/foot. This has the effect of creating a bend in the front knee and dropping the rear shoulder slightly lower than the forward one. When used in full-length bridal portraits, a bent forward knee will give an elegant shape to the dress. With one statement, "Weight on your back foot," you have introduced a series of dynamic lines into an otherwise static composition.

***Facing page, top**—Here is a wonderful family group portrait done on the streets of New York in a location that photographer Emin Kuliyev seems to love. The light is open shade, but it filters in from behind the photographer. The cobblestone street gives the portrait a textural feel and the full-length poses with such an attractive group are perfect—all are relaxed and look great. The photographer is a gifted photojournalist, but also more than capable of relaxing a large group like this into being themselves.*

***Facing page, bottom**—Here's another uncharacteristic pose, and yet look at how many posing elements are "right." The groom's foot points out at an angle, instead of straight into the camera; his other foot is lost in a dark shadow; his hand is angled to the side for a good rendition; the bride's elbow forms a V-shape that draws your eye to their faces; her elbow is out from her body, slimming the arm; and so on. A lot of good posing elements are included in this otherwise "casual" formal. Photograph by Kevin Jairaj.*

As you can see, this is a formal group gone mad. Is it less appealing to the bride and groom than the cookie-cutter version that it started out as? Doubtful. This is full of life and craziness, encapsulating the couple's joy on their wedding day. Photograph by Jim Garner.

This is a good example of a head-and-shoulders formal. The head/neck axes are great, and the pose is between seven-eighths and three-quarters. The lighting is also excellent; a small video light created the main light and it was feathered (angled away to use the dynamic edge of the light) to produce excellent highlight detail. A blue-gelled light was used to create a festive blue highlight on the dress and in the shadows. Photograph by Jim Garner.

Additionally, the subject's feet should be diagonal to the camera. Just as it is undesirable to have the hands facing the lens head-on, so it is with feet. Feet look stumpy when the toes point directly at the camera.

Portrait Lengths

An additional consideration when designing portraits is how much of the subject to include. Generally, a variety of portrait lengths will be required, from full-length images (to show the special attire for the day) to head-and-shoulders images (concentrating on the emotional expressions on the subjects' faces).

Full-Length Portraits. A full-length portrait shows the subject from head to toe. Whether they are standing or sitting, it is important to angle the person to the lens—usually at 30–45 degrees to the camera, with their weight on their back foot.

Three-Quarter-Length Portraits. A three-quarter-length portrait is one that shows the subject from the head down to a region below the waist. Such portraits are usually best composed by having the bottom of the picture fall mid-thigh or mid-calf. Never break the portrait at a joint—a knee or ankle, for example (or an elbow, in the case of shorter views). Crop between joints instead. When you break the composition at a joint, it produces a disquieting feeling in the image.

Head-and-Shoulders Portraits. In a head-and-shoulders portrait, all of your camera technique will be evident, so the focus is especially critical (start with the eyes) and the lighting must be flawless.

With close-up portraits, it is especially important to tilt the head and retain good head-and-shoulders positioning. The shoulders should be at an angle to the camera lens, and the angle of the person's head should be slightly different. Often, head-and-shoulders portraits are of only the face, as in a beauty shot. In this case, it is important to include a dynamic element, such as a diagonal line, which will create visual interest.

Don't be afraid to fill the frame with the bride's or the couple's faces. They will never look as good as they do on their wedding day!

Camera Height

When photographing people with average features, there are a few general rules that govern camera height in relation to the subject. These rules will produce a normal, undistorted perspective.

For head-and-shoulders portraits, the rule of thumb is that camera height should be level with the tip of the subject's nose. For three-quarter-length portraits, the

camera should be at a height midway between the subject's waist and neck. In full-length portraits, the camera should be the same height as the subject's waist.

In each case, the camera is at a height that divides the subject into two equal halves in the viewfinder. This is so that the features above and below the lens/subject axis will be the same distance from the lens, and thus recede equally for "normal" perspective. When the camera is raised or lowered, the perspective (the size relationship between parts of the photo) changes. This is particularly exaggerated when wide-angle lenses are used.

While there is little time for many such corrections on the wedding day, knowing these rules and introducing them into the way you photograph people will make many of these techniques second nature.

SCHEDULING THE IMPORTANT FORMALS

In your game plan, devote about ten minutes for the formal portraits of the bride and groom singly. The bride's portraits can be done at her home before the wedding, and the groom can be photographed at the ceremony before everyone arrives. Generally, you will have to wait until after the wedding ceremony to photograph the bride and groom together.

Formal Portraits of the Bride

In the bride's portraits, you must reveal the delicate detail and design elements of her gown. Start with good head-and-shoulders axis, with one foot forward and her weight on her back leg. Her head should be dipped toward the higher shoulder, which places the entire body into a flattering "S-curve"—a classic pose.

This has become a very popular group portrait in most albums. The bride and her maids are scurrying off somewhere, laughing and having fun and seemingly moving quickly. The photographer, Kevin Jairaj, tilted the camera as an afterthought between frames, which gave the image a strong diagonal and elevated the state of motion.

The bouquet should be held on the same side as the foot that is placed forward and the other hand should come in behind the bouquet. Have her hold the bouquet slightly below waist level, revealing the waistline of the dress and still creating a flattering bend to the elbows.

For a portrait that reveals the back of the dress, which is often quite elegant, turn the bride around and have her gaze back at you. If the gown has a full train, you should also devise a pose that shows it in its entirety, either draped around to the front or behind her. (*Note:* Be sure to have someone help the bride with her gown; you don't want to be responsible for the train dragging through any flowerbeds!) And don't forget about the veil; shooting through the tulle material of the veil for a close-up makes a good portrait.

If you photograph the bride outdoors in shade (or indoors using natural light—such as on a portico or porch), you will probably need an assistant to hold a reflector close to the bride. Bouncing light into her face will give a sparkle to her eyes and fill in any unflattering shadows caused by the directional lighting.

Formal Portraits of the Groom

Generally speaking, the groom's portrait should be less formal than the bride's. Strive for a relaxed pose that

Here is an uncharacteristic but charming bridal portrait done by Michael Greenberg. Done in monotone, the austere surroundings and formal treatment—note that all the elements of the room are square and architecturally correct—and the bride's beautiful Indian attire make this a memorable image. The pose is attractive, yet her hands make her appear to be a little nervous, Her eyes and self-confident smile are the most dynamic elements of the portrait.

Above—*This is a wonderful close-up of the bride by Dan Doke. His band of focus is surprisingly shallow, even though the image was made at f/8 with a 50mm lens on an Canon EOS 5D. The reason for this is that Dan was very close to the bride—and he decided to blur selective regions of the portrait in Photoshop. The final version, also toned in Photoshop, is quite soft and romantic.*

Right—*Jim Garner created this handsome portrait of the groom. Although the shoulders are somewhat straight-on to the camera, the tight crop tends to minimize the effect. The head tilt is toward the low shoulder (a typically masculine style of posing) and he is positioned back in the frame, off center, with the line of his eyes matching the long line of his left shoulder for good visual dynamics. (EOS 5D; EF24–70mm f/2.8L USM lens; 1/160 second at f/2.8; ISO 800)*

*Jesh de Rox created this elegant and unusual portrait of a bride and groom using available light. Jesh made this image by utilizing the great depth of field of a TS-E45mm f/2.8 lens. (*Note: *The "TS" in the lens name stands for tilt/shift; this is the type of lens that an architectural photographer would use to produce absolutely straight lines when photographing buildings.) The image was exposed at f/20.0 for 1/50 second at ISO 800.*

shows his strength and good looks. A three-quarter-length pose is ideal, since you are less concerned about showing his entire ensemble than you are about the bride's.

If the groom is standing, use the same "weight-on-the-back-foot" guideline you employed in the bridal portrait. The front foot should be pointed at an angle to the camera. With the shoulders angled away from the camera lens, have the groom tilt his head toward the lower shoulder in the classic "masculine" pose.

Side lighting often works well for the groom's portrait, and a classic pose with the arms crossed is usually a winner. Remember, if using this pose, to show the edge of the hand. Don't let him grab his biceps; this will make him look like he's cold.

Facing page—*This is an impressive three-quarter-length portrait that says a great deal about the introspective groom and this quiet moment before his wedding. As you can see, very few formal elements of posing are included and he is completely unaware of the photographer. Yet the pose is great and everything about the portrait, from the light to the way his clothes seem to shimmer, is perfect. Photograph by Michael Greenberg.*

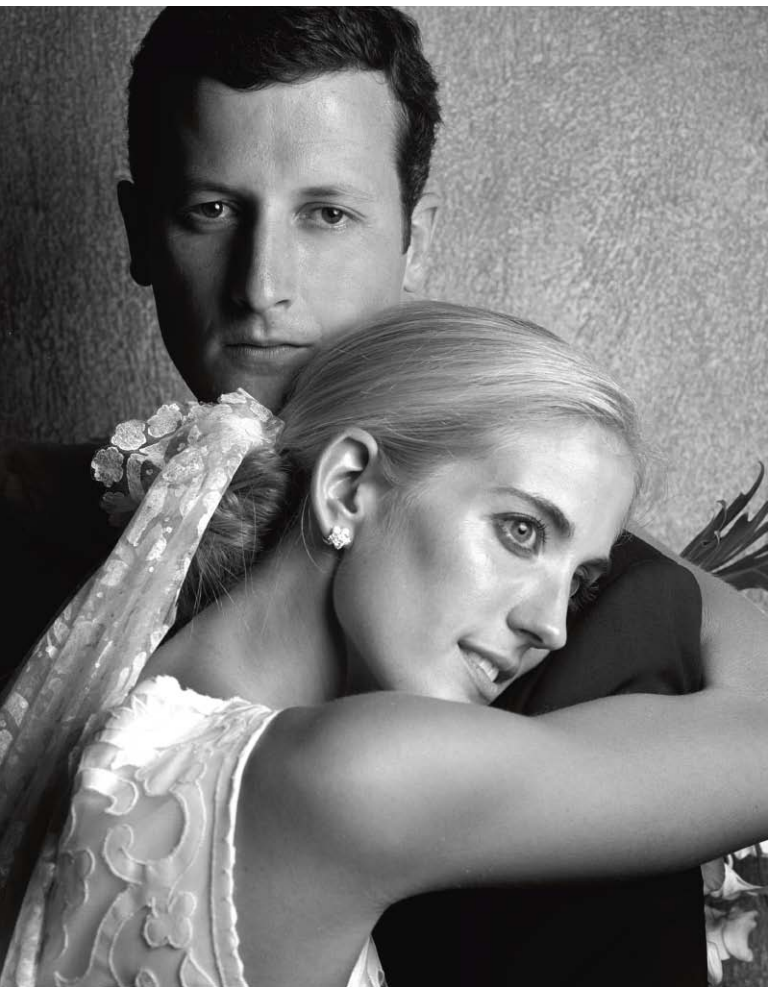
Another good pose for a groom is one with his hands in his pockets in a three-quarter-length view—but have his thumbs hitched on his pants pockets so that you can break up all of the dark tones of his tuxedo. Alternately, you can also have the groom rest one foot on a stool, bench, or other support that is out of view of the camera. He can then lean on his raised knee and lean forward toward the camera.

If the groom has cuffs and cuff links, adjust his jacket sleeves so that these show and look good. It's always a good idea to check the groom's necktie to make sure it's properly tied.

A pleasant smile is better than a serious pose or a "big smiley, laughing" pose. Although there are no hard and fast rules here, "strong" and "pleasant" are good attributes to convey in the groom's portrait. Men's fashion magazines are a good source of inspiration for these contemporary looks.

Formal Portraits of the Bride and Groom

The most important formal portrait is the picture of the bride and groom that is taken immediately after the



Top left—*In this more formal portrait by Nick Adams, the bride is far forward of the groom, allowing the pose and directional light (from camera right and a backlight from camera left) to define the elegant gown. Notice that her weight is on her back foot, her front foot is extended, her body is twisted a little to provide a nice S-curve, the head/neck axis is good, and the hands are nicely posed with subtle breaks at the wrists. Nick warmed the tint in RAW file processing.*

Left—*In this wonderful portrait by Mauricio Donelli, the groom faces the camera, while the bride is posed in contrasting diagonal lines. Beyond the posing, the image displays a release of heartfelt emotion by the couple. Donelli used a softbox close to the couple to produce wraparound light. No fill was used.*

The photojournalistic formal portrait isolates a wonderful moment; posing is secondary. This image was made with a 50mm lens and exposed for 1/320 second at f/3.2 with a silver reflector filling the shadow sides of the couple. Photograph by Emin Kuliyev.

marriage ceremony. Take at least two portraits, a full-length shot and a three-quarter-length portrait. These can be made on the grounds of the church or synagogue, in a doorway, or in some other pleasant location, directly following the ceremony. Have your assistant ready (with reflectors, flash, or whatever other gear you will need to make the portrait) and waiting in the predetermined location. Then, take no more than five minutes making these portraits.

The bride should be positioned slightly in front of the groom. This keeps her in better perspective, relative to the groom, and allows her dress to be seen more fully in the portrait. The bride and groom should be posed facing each other, but each subject should also remain at a 45-degree angle to the camera. Their weight should be on the back legs, and there should be a slight bend in the knee of the bride's front leg, giving a nice line to the dress. They will naturally lean into each other. The

This elegant portrait by Joe Buissink fully details the level of emotion between bride and groom. To the couple, Joe was invisible at this moment.

Facing page, top—*While some might argue that this is not a formal portrait at all, it is the fine art, emotion-filled, kind of photograph brides crave. A texture layer was used in postproduction and parts of the layer were minimized with the eraser tool so that the couple's features weren't obscured. Photograph by Jim Garner.*

Facing page, bottom—*This is one of my favorite formals by Michael Greenberg. The symmetry and rigid straight-on posing give the image an "American Gothic" feeling to it. Michael photographed the image with a wide-angle zoom set to 23mm at an exposure of 1/100 second at f/11, using the small aperture to create plenty of depth of field from the foreground to the buildings at the back of the scene.*

groom should place his hand in the center of the bride's back, and she should have her bouquet in her outside hand (the other hand can be placed behind it).

Vary your poses so that you get a few with them looking at each other, a few looking into the camera, etc. This is a great time to get a shot of them kissing. As noted previously, very few images like this get made on the wedding day, because the couple is usually so busy attending to details and guests.

For more information on creating portraits of the couple, see chapter 6.

6. GROUP PORTRAITS

Formal group portraits fall outside the area of interest of most photojournalists. However, they are still an integral part of almost every wedding. Most wedding photojournalists don't exhibit their formal groups, but they do include them in their albums—usually because brides expect certain group portraits. Even purists will oblige the request for these images, but they will add the special twist that takes the images out of the realm of traditional wedding coverage.

Types of Groups

You will want to photograph the groom and his groomsmen, the bride and her bridesmaids, as well as the complete wedding party in one group. Depending on the wishes of the bride, you may also need to photograph family formals, extended families, or a giant group shot including all of the guests.

Opt for something completely unexpected. Incorporate the environment or architecture, or ask the group to do something uncharacteristic. Even though this is a "posed" shot, it does not have to represent a pause in the flow of the wedding day; it can be fun. You can get a wonderful group image if you exercise a little imagination.

Backgrounds

While it might be tempting to find a great background and shoot all of your groups using it, the effect will be

Groups should be fun. Here, Marcus Bell gets photographed by the groomsmen with their point-and-shoot digital cameras.

Today's bridal group portraits are fun and unstructured. Noel Del Pilar made this group portrait using the sun as a high backlight and the sand as a robust fill-in source. As with all group shots, it is important that each person look good in these images.

Jim Garner wanted to create the illusion that this group was really airborne. He chose a very low camera angle and prepped the guys so that they would get maximum lift off the ground. He made it fun for them, as you can see. While not everybody got "good air," Jim helped the situation by cloning in some sky background beneath them to further enhance the illusion. This image was used as a double-truck bleed spread in the final album, occupying two full pages in the album.

Facing page, top—*Here, Jim Garner used a 70–210mm lens at 173mm and at f/2.8 to capture the bride very sharply and the rest of the bridesmaids as softer elements of the scene. The bride is ultrasharp; the bridesmaids and flower girl, while only a few feet away, are softer and secondary to the bride. Note, too, that the f/2.8 taking aperture completely defocused the background, which could have been distracting with a shorter focal length lens or smaller taking aperture.*

Facing page, bottom—*If you know a big group shot will be called for, make provisions. Sometimes a balcony or second-story location won't be available, so it's a good idea to take along a stepladder. Instead of having the group gawk at the camera, consider providing a focal point—like the bride and groom kissing to the delight of the crowd. Photograph by Marcus Bell.*

Below—*The dark suits and hats contrast against the light colored wall, creating a composition that resembles musical notes on a score. The boy's face, turned slightly toward the camera, adds an aura of solemnity to the observance. Bounce flash was fired at the taking aperture (f/2.8) to add highlights along the shoulders of the dark suits. This is an award-winning photograph by Michael Greenberg.*

monotonous when viewed in the album. Look for several interesting backgrounds, even if they are only ten or twenty feet apart. This will add visual interest to the finished album.

Composition

Successfully designing groups of people depends on your ability to manage the lines and shapes within the composition. The more you learn to recognize these key elements, the more they will become an integral part of your compositions—and the more dynamic your group portraits will be. Please refer to chapter 4 to learn more about this important topic.

Groupings

Couples. The simplest of groups is two people. Whether the group is a bride and groom, mom and dad, or the best man and the maid of honor, the basic building blocks call for one person slightly higher than the other. A good starting point is to position the

mouth of the higher person parallel to the forehead or eyes of the lower person.

Although they can be posed in parallel position, a more interesting dynamic with two people can be achieved by having them pose at 45-degree angles to each other, so their shoulders face in toward one another. With this pose, you can create a number of variations by moving them closer or farther apart.

To create an intimate pose for two, try showing two profiles facing each other. One should still be higher than the other, allowing you to create an implied diagonal line between their eyes, which gives the portrait better visual dynamics. Since this type of image is usually fairly close up, make sure that the frontal planes of the subjects' faces are roughly parallel so that you can hold sharp focus on both.

Trios. A group portrait of three is still small and intimate. It lends itself to a pyramid or diamond-shaped composition, or an inverted triangle, all of which are pleasing to the eye.

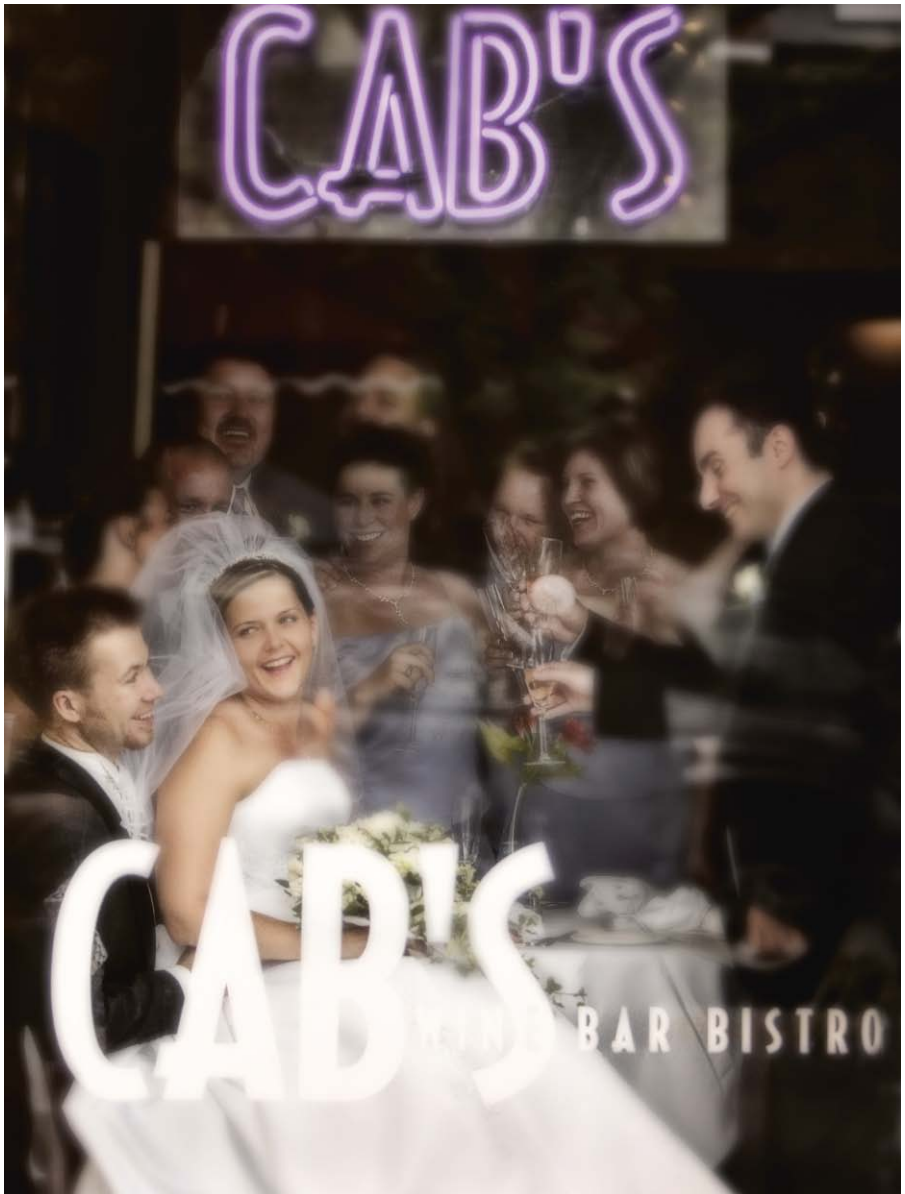
Turn the shoulders of those at both ends of the group in toward the center of the composition to loop the group together, ensuring that the viewer's eye does not stray out of the frame. Once you add a third person, you will begin to notice the interplay of lines and shapes inherent in good group design. The graphic power of a well-defined diagonal line in a composition will compel the viewer to keep looking at the image.

Try different vantage points—a bird's-eye view, for example. Cluster the group together, use a safe stepladder or other high vantage point, and you've got a lovely variation on the small group.

Wedding photojournalists take great creative liberties in making the formal portrait of the bride and groom. This image by Jim Garner is illuminated fully by the candles on the table. The emotion between the couple is really the "subject" of the image—and the connection is as intense as the flames. The image was made with Canon's remarkable EF 24mm f/1.4L USM lens at an exposure of 1/100 second at f/1.4, ISO 1000. In RAW file processing, Jim lowered the color temperature to 2426K, very close to candlelight.

The silhouette can be an elegant mode for capturing the bride and groom. The silhouette, by nature, emphasizes form over detail; to be effective, the pose must be almost dance-like with fluid body lines. Jim Garner made this beautiful image with a 70–200mm f/2.8 lens set to 105mm. The exposure, at ISO 800, was 1/400 second at f/2.8 against a perfect Pacific Northwest sunset.

A moment like this is truly spontaneous, as if the photographer wasn't even there. But there are also good group dynamics at work. The three subjects form a pleasant pyramid shape, with the two women facing each other as if to contain the emotional response. Marcus Bell made this fine image using subtle backlight and weak flash-fill from the camera position.



Jeff and Julia Woods captured the great camaraderie and friendship of this group of friends through a pub window—as if no one knew they were outside taking this picture. This is the essence of fly-on-the-wall photojournalism. The light is all window light, but you can see it drop off quickly in intensity the farther the person is from the window. The exposure was made at 1/1000 second at f/2.8 with a 90mm focal length setting on a 70–210mm lens.

Even-Numbered Groups. You will find that even numbers of people are more difficult to pose than odd-numbered groupings. The reason is that the eye and brain tend to accept the disorder of odd-numbered objects more readily than even-numbered objects. (*Note:* As you add more people to a group, remember to do everything you can to keep the camera back parallel to the plane of the group to ensure everyone in the photograph is sharply focused.)

With four people, you can simply add a person to the existing poses for three described above. Be sure to keep the head height of the fourth person different from any of the others in the group. Also, be aware that you are now forming shapes with your composition—pyramids, extended triangles, diamonds, and curved lines.

Larger Groups. With five or six people, you should begin to think in terms of creating linked subgroups. This is when a posing device like the armchair can come into play. An armchair is the perfect posing device for photographing up to about eight people. The chair is best positioned roughly 30 to 45 degrees to the camera. Whoever will occupy the seat (usually the bride) should be seated laterally across the seat cushion on the edge of the chair, so that their weight does not rest on the chair back. This promotes good sitting posture and narrows the lines of the waist and hips, for both men and women. With one person seated, you can then position the others close and on the arms of the chair, leaning in toward the central person. Sometimes only one arm of the armchair is used to create a more dynamic triangle shape.

Hands can be a problem in groups. Despite their small size, they attract visual attention—particularly against dark clothing. They can be especially troublesome in seated groups, where at first glance you might think there are more hands than there should be. A general rule of thumb is to either show all of the hand

This is a group of eleven groomsmen taken by Kevin Jairaj. If you let your eyes wander across the group, you will see three groups of three guys, plus a grouping of two on the far right side. This is intentionally done to subdivide the large group, preventing it from becoming a "team" photo all on one plane. Instead, it is a moody, introspective image of the young men, beautifully done with stage lighting and carefully composed to give the image rhythm and unity.

PANORAMIC GROUPS

If you have the capability to include panoramic pages in your album, this is a great way to feature groups—especially large ones. These should be shot on an extra-wide format, like 6x9cm or 6x17cm. Your camera technique will definitely show up with images this large, so be sure the plane of focus is aligned with your group and that everyone is in focus. Also, as needed, use the proper amount of fill-flash to lighten facial shadows across the group. Generally speaking, if you use fill-flash across a wide group, it will take several flash units spaced across the group and fired at the same aperture/output. The flash output should be one stop less than the ambient light reading. For example, if the daylight exposure reading is 1/250 second at f/5.6, your flash units should be set to fire at f/4 for adequate (but subtle) fill-in flash.

JB and DeEtte Sallee are masters at producing the panoramic group photo. This one is exceptional and covered two full pages in the couple's album. The camera is perfectly parallel to the buildings so they record architecturally straight and true. Tripod-mounting the camera helps in regulating camera positioning so that straight lines remain straight. The horizon line is leveled, as well.

Facing page, top—*What a wild and crazy group this is! It is completely unchoreographed in a wacky, vaudevillian way—groomsmen piggy backing bridesmaids, who buckle under the weight; guys dropping their trousers—it's completely out of control. Yet, this is what it's all about: having fun on a once-in-a-lifetime day. The photograph was made, and no doubt inspired, by the photographers, Jeff and Julia Woods.*

Facing page, bottom—*Big groups like this one require big distractions. Otherwise, everyone will simply gawk at the camera. The photographer, Marcus Bell, choreographed "the kiss" to the great enjoyment of the large group. Marcus positioned himself above the group on a perch so he could fire away at 8 frames per second. Yes, there are those few looking at the camera, including the flower girl still holding her rose petals in the foreground, but for the most part the image is a huge success and a brilliant way to captivate a very large group.*

or show none of it. Don't allow a thumb, or half a hand, or a few fingers to show. Hide as many hands as you can behind flowers, hats, or other people. Be aware of these potentially distracting elements, and look for them as part of your visual inspection of the frame before you make the exposure.

Really Big Groups. In really big groups, the use of different levels helps to create a sense of visual interest and lets the viewer's gaze bounce from one face to another (as long as there is a logical and pleasing flow to the arrangement). The placement of faces, not bodies, dictates how pleasing and effective the composition will be.

Having the guests wave to the camera usually results in too many faces being lost behind raised arms. However, this is a good time for the bride to throw her bou-

It's hard to imagine a more jubilant group portrait than this one by Jim Garner. There are twenty people in the bridal party and notice the number and type of stories happening within the portrait simultaneously. Garner is a master at creating a moment in which his subjects completely relax and are themselves. What bride wouldn't want this image in her album?

quet. Ask her to throw it over her head into the crowd behind, mainly upward and slightly to the rear. Alternately, you might simply ask the couple to kiss and have all the guests watch them—as Marcus Bell did in the image at the bottom of page 98.

When you are photographing large groups, an assistant is invaluable for getting all of the people together and helping you to pose them. Keep in mind that it also takes less time to photograph one large group than it does to create a series of smaller groups, so it is usually time well spent (provided that the bride wants the groups done in this way).

Focus and Depth of Field

As your groups get bigger, it's important to keep your depth of field under control. The stepladder is an invaluable tool for larger groups; it lets you elevate the camera position and more easily keep the camera back parallel to the group for the most efficient focus. Another trick is to have the back row of the group lean in, while the front row leans back slightly. This creates a shallower subject plane that makes it easier to hold the focus across the entire group.

If you are short of space, use a wide-angle lens or a wide-angle camera (like the Brooks Veri-Wide, a 35mm panoramic camera with a rotating shutter). Wide-angle coverage results in the people at the front appearing larger than those at the back, which may be advantageous if the wedding party is at the front of the group. Make sure everyone is sharp. This is more of a certainty with a wide-angle lens and its inherent depth of field. Focus at a distance one-third of the way into the group. This should ensure that everyone is sharp at f/5.6 or f/8 with a wide-angle lens.

After You've Snapped the Shutter

Many wedding photographers will tell you that the best groups and formals are often taken seconds after you've told the people, "Thanks, I've got it." Everyone relaxes and they revert to having a good time and being themselves. This is a great time to fire off a few more frames—you might get that great group shot or formal portrait that you didn't get in the posed version.

7. WEDDING ALBUMS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Like any good story, a wedding album should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. For the most part, albums are laid out chronologically. However, there are now vast differences in the presentation—primarily caused by the digital page-layout process. Often, events are jumbled in favor of themes or other methods of organization. There still must be a logic to the layout, though, and it should be readily apparent to everyone who examines the album. The wedding album has changed drastically, evolving into more of a storytelling medium. Still, album design is basically the same thing as laying out a book, and there are some basic design principles that should be followed.

Basic Design Principles

Title Page. An album should always include a title page, giving the details of the wedding day. It will become a family album, and having a title page will add an historic element to its priceless nature.

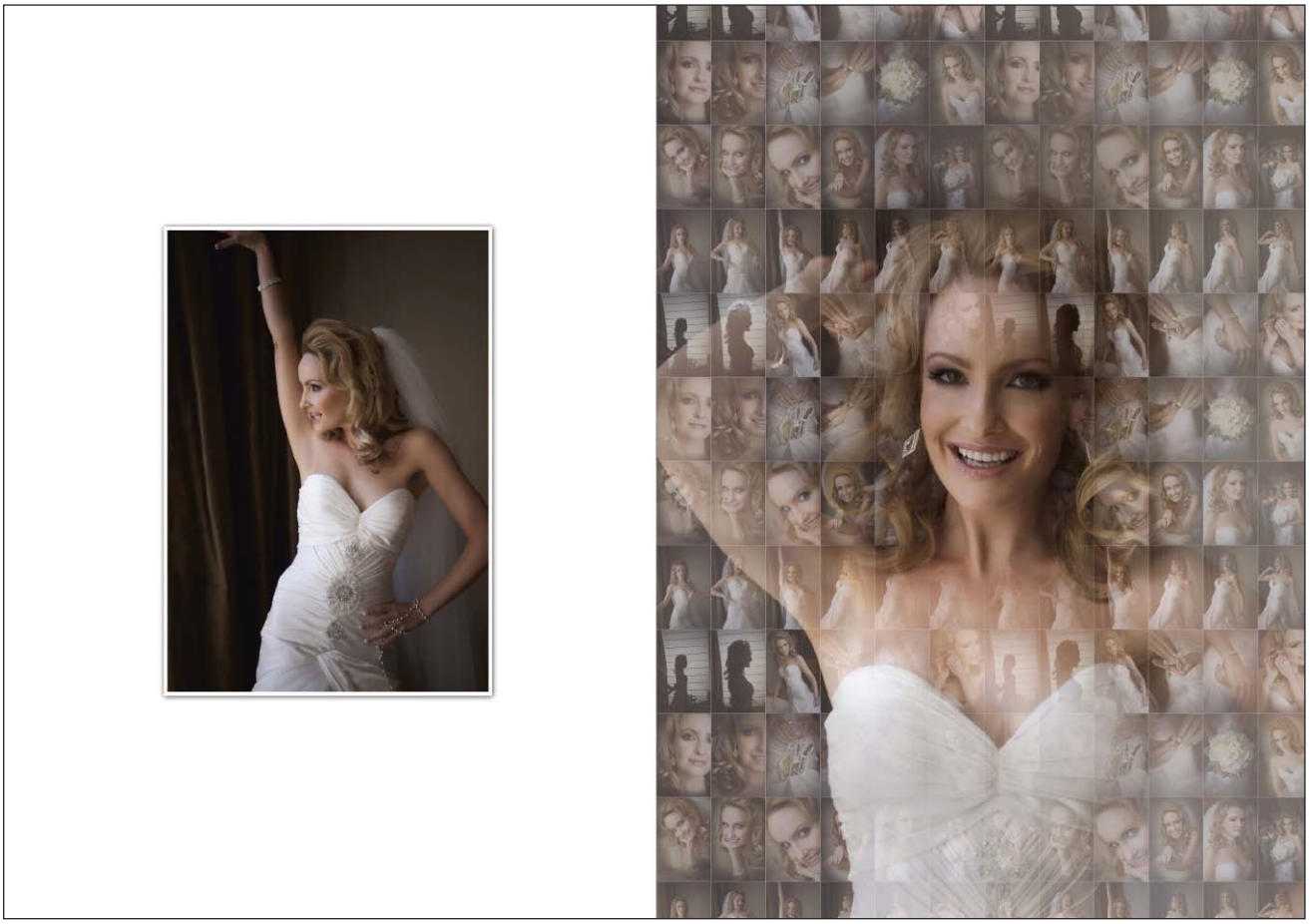
Left and Right Pages. Look at any well designed book or magazine and study the images that appear on the left- and right-hand pages. They are decidedly different, but have one thing in common: they lead the eye into the center of the book, commonly referred to as the "gutter." These photos use the very same design elements that photographers use in creating effective images—lead-in lines, curves, shapes, and patterns. If a line or pattern forms a "C" shape, it is an ideal left-hand page, since it will draw the viewer's eye toward the gut-

A title page can be done for both bride and groom. Yervant often uses a giant initial capital letter as a symbol in the opening pages. This is one for the groom.

Here is the bride's opening page. As you can see, Yervant chose to make the pages quite different, incorporating elements special to each individual. The common thread is the initial capital letter and the color coordination on the pages.

Left—*Negative space is a big consideration when shooting for the album. This beautiful image by Jerry Ghionis has the bride looking to her right, making it a beautiful left- or right-hand page If a right-hand page, it directs the viewer to turn to the next page of the album. The negative area to the left could be used for cut-ins (a series of photos), type, or a single image. Once one begins thinking in these terms, good album design is always in the forefront of your creativity and guides the way you create and edit images.*

Below—*When the photographer thinks in terms of album design when shooting, you get images like this one by Jerry Ghionis. The great direction provided by the groom's pose and the veil's windward direction create a great left-to-right dynamic. The image could be used in the album to lead the eye to the right-hand page, or (if used on a spread) to direct the viewer's eye to the next sequence of pages.*



There are some interesting design elements going on here. The left-hand page seems to be directing the viewer to the left—but analyze the bride's left arm, which forms an arrow shape pointing to the right-hand page. The same symbol is seen in the large portrait of the bride, her elbow pointing to the left-hand page. The two similar poses mimic each other, forcing the eye into a ping-pong match between the pages. Design elements are usually subtle and don't hit you over the head, although this scenario is quite obvious. Photograph and album design by Yervant. This is a page design treatment taken from Yervant's Page Gallery album design templates.

ter and across to the right-hand page. If an image is a backward "C" shape, it is an ideal right-hand page. Familiar shapes like hooks, loops, triangles, or circles are used in the same manner to guide the eye into the center of the two-page spread and across from the left to the right-hand page.

There is infinite variety in laying out images, text, and graphic elements to create this left and right orientation. For example, a series of photos can be stacked diagonally, forming a line that leads from the lower left-hand corner of the left page to the gutter. That pattern can be mimicked on the right-hand page, or it can be contrasted for variety.

Even greater visual interest can be attained when a line or shape starts on the left-hand page, continues through the gutter onto the right-hand page, then moves back again to the left-hand page. This is the height of visual movement in page design. Visual design should be playful and coax the eye to follow paths and signposts through the elements on the pages.

Variety. When you lay out your images for the album, think in terms of variety of size. Some images should be small, some big. Some should extend across the spread. Some, if you are daring, can even be hinged and extend outside (above or to the right or left) the bounds of the album. No matter how good the indi-

Above—*One must always remember where the gutter is in the album—dead center in the middle—and compose images accordingly. In this Jerry Ghionis image, the bride looks back to the right-hand page from the left-hand page. It's a beautiful double-truck (two page) bleed treatment in the making.*

Left—*In this Yervant image, the large close-up image on the left and the smaller image on the right are in perfect balance because they include the same strong diagonal component. It is an interesting juxtaposition that gives liveliness to the album design. The two images contrast (create tension between one another) because they are of different sizes and treatments—one is very sharp, one is very soft and moody.*

vidual photographs are, the effect of an album in which all the images are the same size is static.

You can introduce variety by combining black & white and color, even on the same page. Try combining detail shots and wide-angle panoramas. How about featuring, on facing pages, a series of close-up portraits of the bride as she listens and reacts to the toasts? Don't settle for the one-picture-per-page approach; it's monotonous and boring.

Visual Weight. Learn as much as you can about the dynamics of page design. Think in terms of visual weight, not just size. Use symmetry and asymmetry,

contrast and balance. Create visual tension by combining dissimilar elements. Don't be afraid to try different things. The more experience you get in laying out the images for the album, the better you will get at presentation. Study the album pages presented here, and you will see great creativity and variety in how the images are combined and the infinite variety of effects that may be created.

Reading Direction. In Western civilization, we read from left to right and top to bottom. We start on the left page and finish on the right. Therefore, good page design starts the eye at the left and takes it to the right, and it does so differently on every page.

Traditional Albums

Many wedding photojournalists still prefer to use traditional wedding albums, either because their clients request them or because they feel that traditional albums represent a hallmark of timeless elegance.

Post-Mounted Albums. Album companies offer a variety of different page configurations for placing horizontal or vertical images in tandem on a page, or for combining any number of small images on a single page. The individual pages are then post-mounted, and the final album can be as thick or thin as the number of pages. Photos are inserted into high quality mattes, and the albums themselves are often made of the finest leathers.

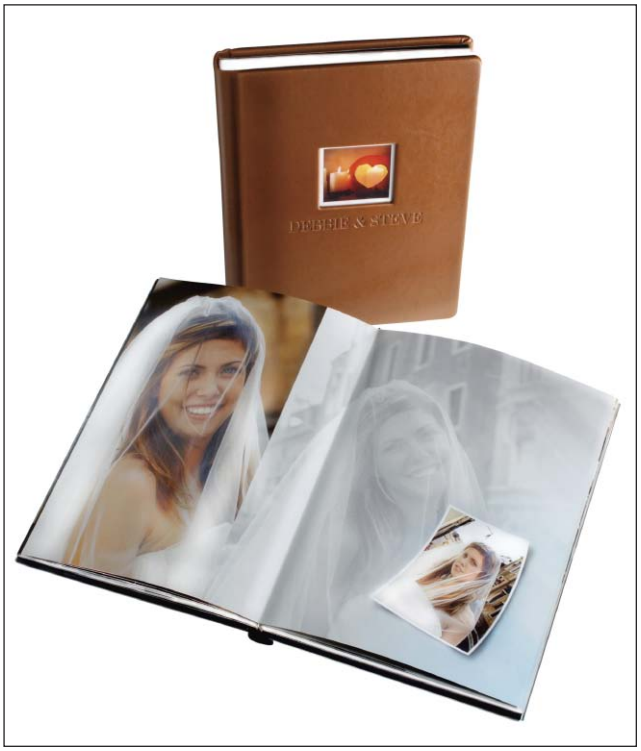
Bound Albums. A different kind of album is the bound album, in which all the images are permanently mounted to each page, and the book is bound professionally by a bookbinder. These are elegant and very popular. Since the photos are dry-mounted to each page, the individual pages can support any type of lay-

This is most decidedly a right-hand page. The area to the left lends itself to cut-ins or scene-setters. What is unique is that the bride's gaze is upward, which runs counter to the left-to-right horizontal mindset of the wedding album. Contrast and purposeful misdirection are good things in an album because they add visual unexpectedness. Photograph by Jerry Ghionis.

out from "double-truck" (two bleed pages) layouts to a combination of any number of smaller images.

Library Binding. Another form of album uses conventional photographic prints made to the actual page size. These prints are then mounted, trimmed, and bound in an elegant leather album that is actually a custom-made book. If you want to create album pages with multiple images, your lab must prepare these prints to size before submitting them to the album company for binding.

Here is a selection of magazine-style and book-style albums, complete with dust jackets, from GraphiStudio, an Italian album designer that is popular with wedding photographers.



Here is a GraphiStudio die-cut magazine-type album with flush bleed pages and embossed cover with a photographic inset in rich leather. This is the top of the line, so far as albums go.

Magazine-Style Digital Albums

In recent years, there has been a backlash against traditional drop-in album types. While elegant, the contemporary wedding photojournalist does not want to see his or her stylish images placed in anything but the most contemporary album concept.

Covers. Companies like Albums Australia offer everything from stainless steel covers to exotic woods—like pearwood with a golden spine of leather imprinted with autumn leaves. Or perhaps the cover should be something artistic like "fusion," a brushed metal cover that can be accented with a spine that resembles modern art. Or how about a clear cedar cover with a leather spine that is emblazoned with monarch butterflies? Or maybe something hot, like Chili Red Leather? What could be more classically modern than the black & white photo cover with an elegant black leather spine? These are just a few of the myriad cover combinations it is possible to create with Albums Australia's TDA-2 software—and you get to see exactly what the album will look like before placing the order.

Layout. Digital output allows the photographer or album designer to create backgrounds, inset photos,

CREATIVITY COUNTS

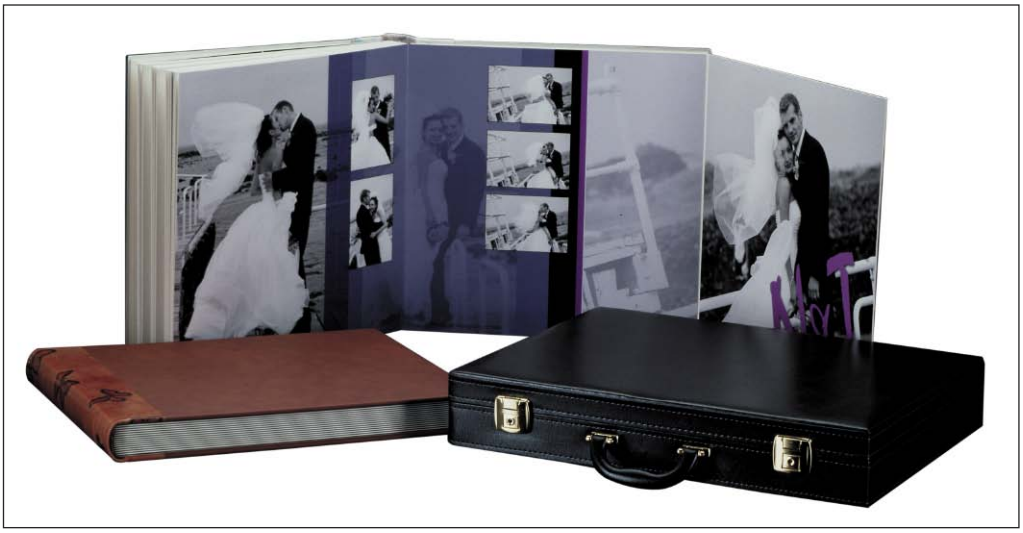
Wedding photojournalism seems to be bringing the best and brightest artists into the field because of its wide-open level of creativity. Martin Schembri, who produces elegant, magazine-style digital wedding albums, is as much a graphic designer as a top-drawer photographer. Schembri assimilates design elements from the landscape of the wedding—color, shape, line, architecture, light and shadow—and he also studies the dress, accessories, etc. He then works on creating an overall work of art that reflects these design elements on every page.

and output the pages as complete entities. Sizing the photos does not depend on what size or shape mats you have available; you can size the photos infinitely on the computer. Once the page files are finalized, any number of pages can be output simply and inexpensively. Albums can be completely designed on the computer in programs like QuarkXPress, Photoshop, or InDesign, or with software specific to the album manufacturer.

These magazine-style albums feature dynamic layouts with a sense of design and style. Images are not treated as individual entities, necessarily, but are often grouped with like images, organized by theme rather than in chronological order. This affords the photographer the luxury of using many more pictures in varying sizes throughout the album. Collages and other design techniques are common in the magazine-style album, and you will often see type used sparingly throughout.

Charles Maring suggests sampling the colors of the images using the eyedropper tool in Photoshop. When you click on an area with the eyedropper, the color palette displays the component colors in the CMYK and RGB modes. You can then use those color readings for graphic elements on the page you create with those photographs, producing an integrated, color-coordinated design. If using a page-layout program like InDesign, those colors can be used for color washes on the page or for background colors that match the Photoshop colors precisely.

Storytelling. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the digitally produced magazine-style albums is that they are an ideal complement to the storytelling images of the wedding photojournalist. Because there are no boundaries to page design or the number of images used on each page, the album can be designed to im-



Here's a good example of a gatefold page layout that extends the width of the album to beyond panoramic dimensions. Album by Albums Australia.

This is a very wide panoramic album by Yervant. Open, the album is 25 inches wide—each page is 12.5 x 6.25 inches, which allows for a wide spectrum of storytelling possibilities. Notice that the pages have flow from one scene to the next, like a storyboard. This is intentionally done to treat the eye to a journey across the expanse of both pages.

Here are two of David Williams' "Detail Minis." Sometimes these are album pages, sometimes they are large prints suitable for framing. One is loosely organized around the venue of the wedding, the other is based around the bride getting ready. They are all random shots made with a 50mm f/1.4 lens shot wide open. Williams will sometimes use a small video light to add what he calls "a kiss of light."

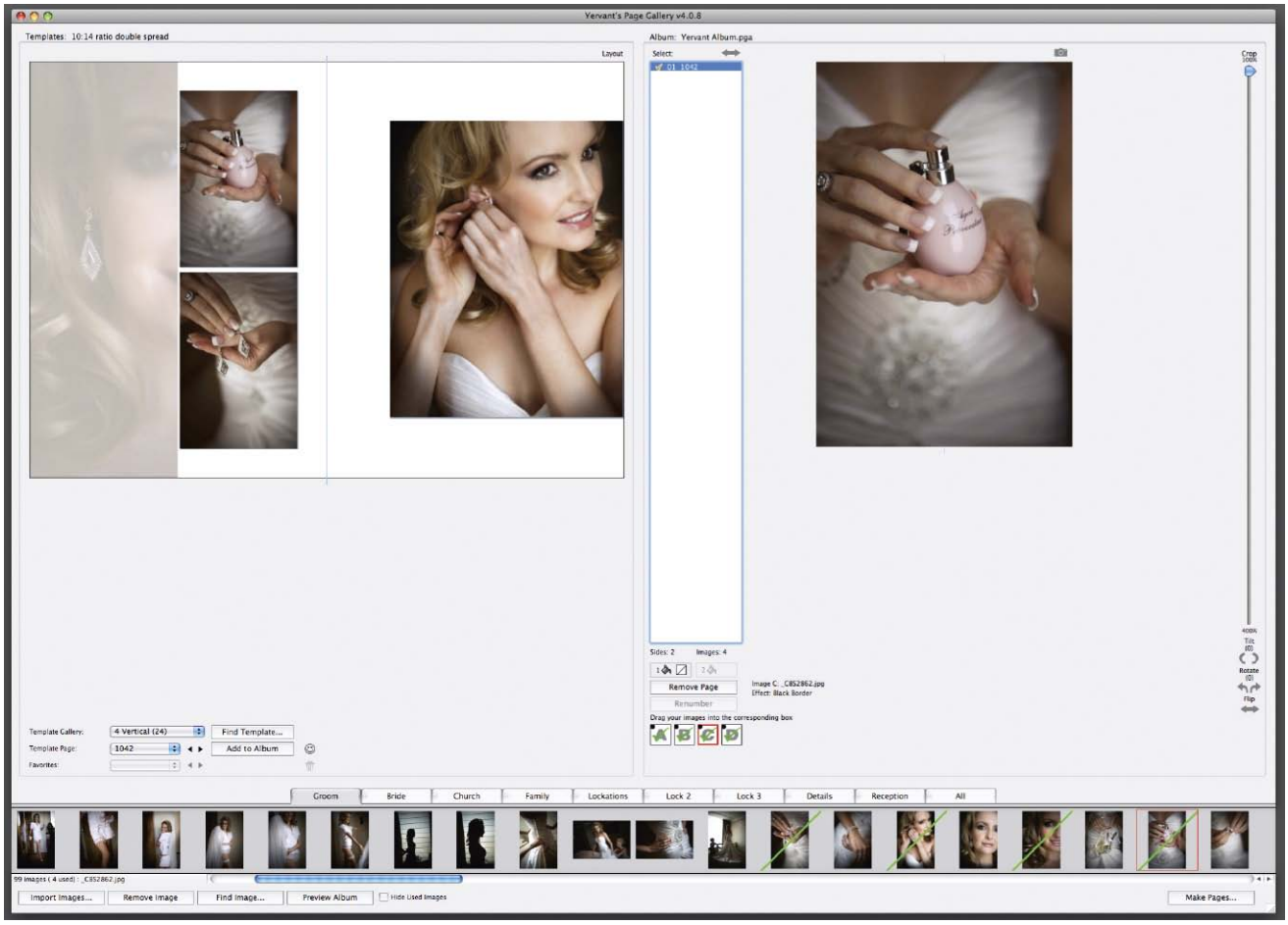
part many different aspects of the overall story. The difference between the standard drop-in album type and the magazine-style album is almost like the difference between an essay and a novel. The first tells the story in narrative terms only, the latter illuminates the story with greater nuance and complexity.

David Anthony Williams. Wedding and portrait photographer David Anthony Williams has created a genre of pictures that he produces at weddings called "Detail Minis," which are a series of shots loosely arranged by theme, color, or subject matter. He carries a camera with him specifically for doing the minis. It's a 35mm DSLR with a 50mm f/1.4 lens. He shoots this lens wide open on all of the minis and uses primarily fast ISOs (800 and higher), so that he can shoot in any light.

The "Detail Minis" Williams shoots are sometimes incorporated into double-truck image panels with larger, more conventionally made images; other times, the minis are alone on a page grouped in sixes or twelves as part of a window-pane treatment. They add a flavor to the album that is unsurpassed because, invariably, the minis are things that almost no one else even noticed. There is no theme too far-fetched for him to photograph.

Charles Maring. Charles Maring, well known for his award-winning wedding albums, believes that each page of the album should make a simple statement or tell a story within the overall wedding story. Instead of cluttering pages, he tries to narrow his focus and utilize the images that make the best statement of the moment. He likes to think more like a cinematographer,

Marc Weisberg devotes a lot of time on the wedding day to details and assembles them in a magazine-type layout.

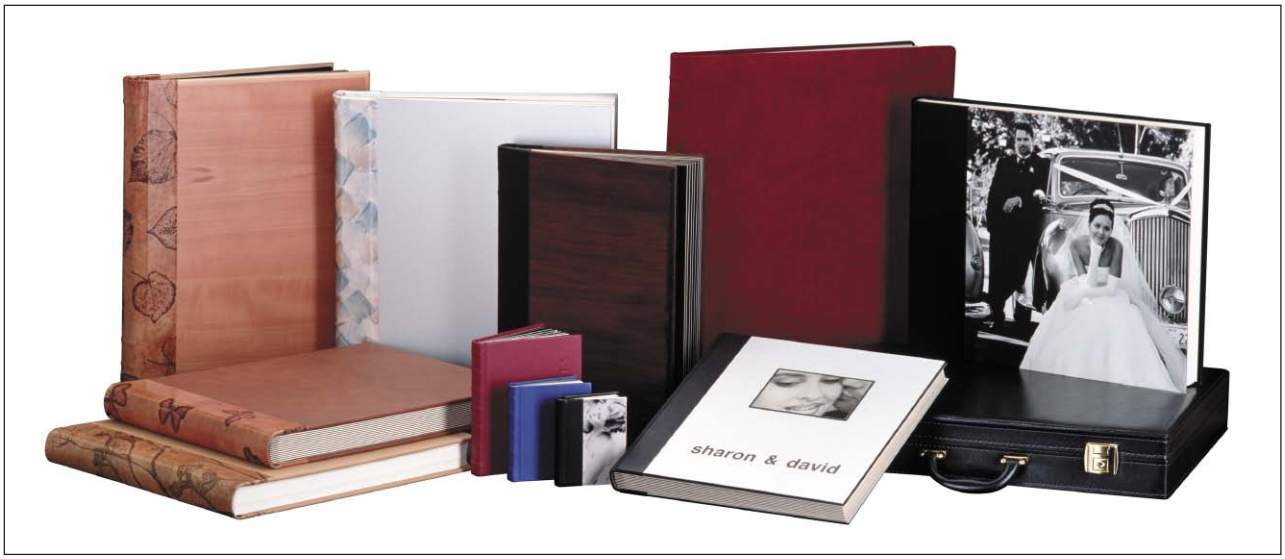


This shows the user-interface of Yervant's Page Gallery. On the bottom are the imported images available to be placed into the layout. On the top left you can see a layout of a two-page spread with a total of four images. On the top right you can see one of the images that has been selected to add a black border to it.

Here is a finished spread (a left and right page) from an album generated by Yervant in his Page Gallery software.

MINI ALBUMS

Photographer Martin Schembri also creates what he calls a "mini-magazine" album—a miniature version of the main album that is small enough for brides to pop in their handbags to show all of their friends. Because they are so portable, the mini albums get far more exposure than a large, precious album. It also works as a great promotion for the photographer.



Here is a collection of various albums offered by Albums Australia, including mini (purse-size) albums for the bride, so she doesn't have to lug the big, expensive album with her to show her friends her wedding pictures.

analyzing the images he sees on the computer monitor and reinventing the feelings of the moment.

Maring thinks of the album as a series of chapters in a book. He uses a scene setter to open and close each chapter. Within the chapter, he includes a well-rounded grouping of elements—fashion, love, relationship, romance, preparation, behind the scenes, ambience, etc. These are the key elements he keeps in mind while documenting the wedding day in his photographs.

Design Templates. To streamline the album-design process, many photographers like to use pre-designed page templates. Australian photographer Yervant has designed a popular software package called Yervant's Page Gallery, which includes hundreds of different, ready-to-use templates. These incorporate artistic designs and layout options designed by Yervant, who is one of the highest-profile wedding photographers in the world. All you have to do is choose an image file, then the software will crop, resize, and position the image into your choice of layout design, all within a few minutes. Page Gallery is strictly for use by photographic studios that become registered and licensed users. It is not available to labs except by special licensing arrangement, meaning that if you purchase the software, you don't have to worry that every other wedding photographer on the block will be putting out similar albums. For more information, visit www.yervant.com.

The Design Factor. Charles Maring sees digital technology producing a whole new kind of photographer. "I consider myself as much as a graphic artist and a designer as I do a photographer," he explains. The majority of Maring's images have what he calls "layers of techniques that add to the overall feeling of the photograph." None of these techniques would be possible, he says, without the creativity that Photoshop and other programs, such as Corel Painter, give him. "Having a complete understanding of my capabilities has also raised the value of my work. The new photographer that embraces the tools of design will simply be worth more than just a cameraman," he says.

One of the reasons wedding photography is so highly creative is that the wedding album is the perfect medium for combining creative effects. Here, Michael Schuhmann used a split-toning technique performed in Photoshop. The effect sets the perfect mood for this shot.

"The design factor has also given our studio a whole different wedding-album concept that separates us from other photographers in our area. Our albums are uniquely our own, and each couple has the confidence of knowing that they have received an original work of art. I am confident that this will actually separate photographers further in the years to come. I have seen a lot of digital album concepts, some good, some not so good. When you put these tools in the hands of somebody with a flair for fashion, style, and design, you wind up with an incredible album. There is something to be said for good taste, and with all of these creative tools at hand, the final work of art winds up depending on who is behind the mouse, not just who is behind the camera," he notes.

Signing Off on the Design. Digital albums, unlike traditional albums in which prints are inserted into interchangeable mats, cannot be changed once they are bound. I have heard a number of horror stories about discrepancies between what was ordered and what was delivered. Further, the lab may also make a mistake, which at least gets you off the hook for the cost of a remake, but significantly delays delivery while the album is remade.

There are two things you can do to streamline the process and minimize mistakes. First, bring the couple back for one last look at the design (on your computer) and have them "sign-off" on the final design. Then, before you ship the files off to the binder or album company, use Flightcheck (an application used by publishers) to double-check that all the image files, graphic files and fonts (if any) are present, and in the right size and format. If using QuarkXPress to build the album, you can use a similar function called "Collect for Output," and in InDesign, a function called "Package," both of which assemble all the image files, fonts,

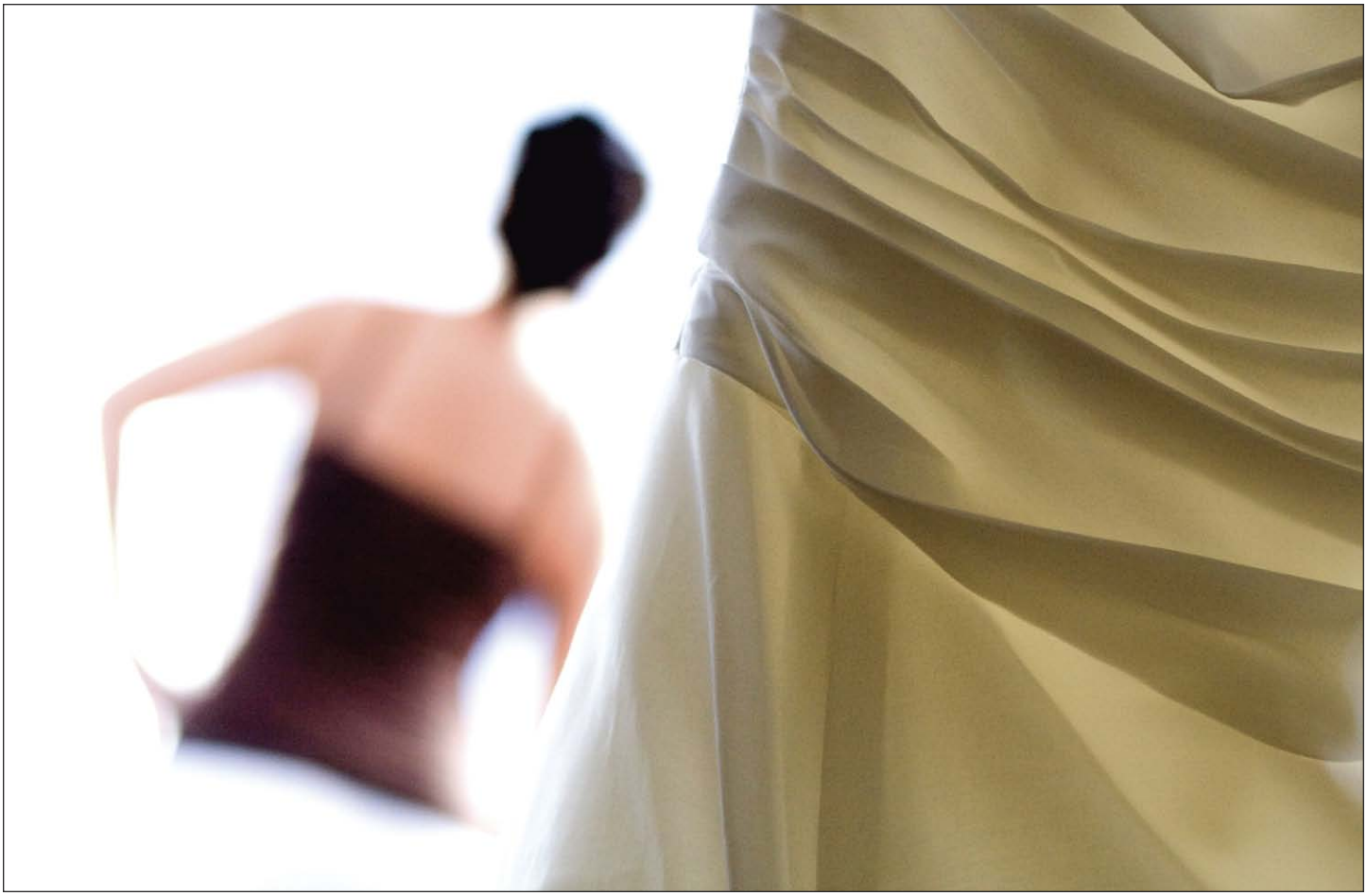
and monitor profiles into a single folder, so that the people on the other end have everything they need to create your pages.

Special Effects

The sheer number of special effects possible in today's albums is almost mind-boggling. Like anything else, overuse of such effects makes them not so special any more. The following are a few that contemporary wedding photojournalists will find worth considering.

Borders. Border treatments—whether they are created by the lab, or by the photographer in Photoshop, or with a third party plug-in—can enliven a special section of the album. One edge treatment that is quite

Here is an image that has been cross-processed in Photoshop. Many actions and plug-ins are available for this type of effect, and they're infinitely variable. Photograph by Michael Schuhmann.



Black & white infrared can produce a striking page in the wedding album. This beautiful example is by Marc Weisberg.

popular is called "sloppy borders," which calls for the lab to print the files with the same look that was produced in film photography when milled, oversize negative carriers were used to allow the edges of the frame to show.

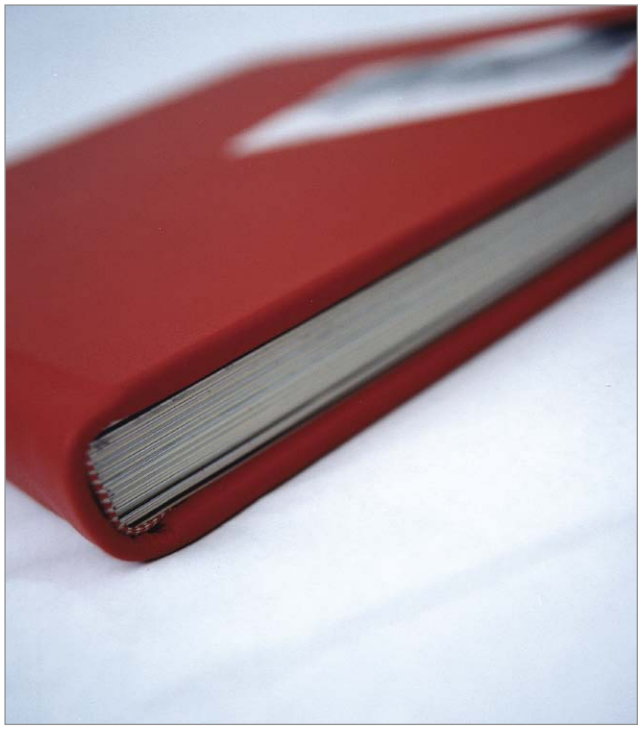
A wide range of edge treatments are available as plug-ins. Extensis Frame Effects operate in page-layout programs like Quark or InDesign. Photoshop also has a full range of border treatments that are accessed by going to the Actions menu and activating Frames.atn.

Facing page, top—*Marc Weisberg used selective focus to create an image that would work well on any album page. Marc used an 85mm f/1.8 lens, which has inherently shallow depth of field at its widest apertures, to front-focus on the gown, allowing the bride to go out of focus, almost as if she were a mirage.*

Facing page, bottom—*This is a popular special effect that calls for using textured layer elements and varying their opacity in the final rendering. These layers are available from a variety of photographers, including Jesh de Rox (http://enlighten.jeshderox.com/#texture). Photograph by Michael Schuhmann.*

Cross-Processing. In film photography, cross-processing meant color slides were processed in C-41 (negative) chemistry, or color negatives were processed in E-6 (color slide) chemistry. Not much of this is done anymore, but the look of cross-processing remains a popular digital effect. It reverses tones and creates a blue or green cast in the image. Tiffen makes several cross-processing filters, which are available in the company's Dfx suite of digital filters (www.tiffen.com).

Infrared Photography. Infrared (IR) film is very grainy and renders green foliage in shades of white or light gray. It also does some beautiful things with light-colored skin tones, producing a milkiness that resembles marble. Black & white infrared film must be



Here is a close-up look of the book binding techniques found in these albums.

handled carefully—the camera must be loaded and unloaded in total darkness. It is probably best to devote one camera body exclusively to IR film, so that you do not have to bring along a light-tight changing bag. The correct shooting ISO is a matter of testing, as is filtration. Most often, black & white infrared is used with a #25 Red filter to darken skies and lighten foliage.

Digital cameras block most IR because it is known to contaminate the visible light being captured on the digital media, thus degrading image quality. Most digital cameras use an IR cutoff filter that blocks all of the infrared radiation. Employing an IR pass filter (Wratten filter #87) to block some or most of the visible light, but yet transmit the infrared radiation, you can produce an effect much like black & white infrared—minus the grain. As with IR film, skin tones are fabulous and quite different than when recorded normally in digital. The drawback to this technique is that long exposures are required, meaning a tripod-mounted camera and bright sunlight—which, oddly enough, does not produce excessive contrast in the final images.

There are also a number of software treatments to produce black & white infrared that do not require the tedium of using the IR Pass filter.

Hand Coloring. Another special effect is hand coloring prints, either with Kodak Retouching Colors or Prismacolor pencils. Often, prints to be hand colored are printed in black & white or with one predominant color visible. The remainder of the print is hand colored. When complete, the image may be scanned (for a digital album), or used as is (for a conventional album). Both styles require patience to perfect. Again, however, this is a technique that can also be accomplished in Photoshop.

Panoramics and Gatefolds. Regardless of which album type you use, adding panoramic format images can add great visual interest—particularly if using the bleed-mount digital or library-type albums. Panoramics should not be done as an afterthought, since the degree of enlargement can be extreme. When shooting panoramics, be sure to offset the bride and groom so that they don't fall in the gutter of a two-page spread.

One of the more interesting aspects of digital albums is the gatefold, which is created using a panoramic size print on the right- or left-hand side, hinged so that it folds flat into the album. Sometimes the gatefold can be double-sided, revealing four page-size panels of images. The bindery can handle such pages quite easily, and it provides a very impressive presentation—particularly if it is positioned in the center of the album.

Albums Australia is a digital album manufacturer that offers gatefolds as a standard feature of their TDA-2 album design software (TDA stands for "total design ability"). This is a drag-and-drop program with full preview capability that lets you design your digital album using just about any page configuration you can imagine. Additionally, the program also features all of the materials variations that the company offers, such as the different colors and styles of leather cover binding and the interior page treatments.

Tilting the Camera. A very popular (and sometimes overused) technique with wedding photojournalists is

tilting the camera. This can be especially effective when used for wide-angle shots—so much so, in fact, that with certain shots it cannot be determined whether the photo is truly a vertical or a horizontal image. Tilting the camera helps improve page dynamics, providing a built-in diagonal line within the composition. You will see lots of tilted shots on digital album pages as "guideposts" leading you to other places within the layout.

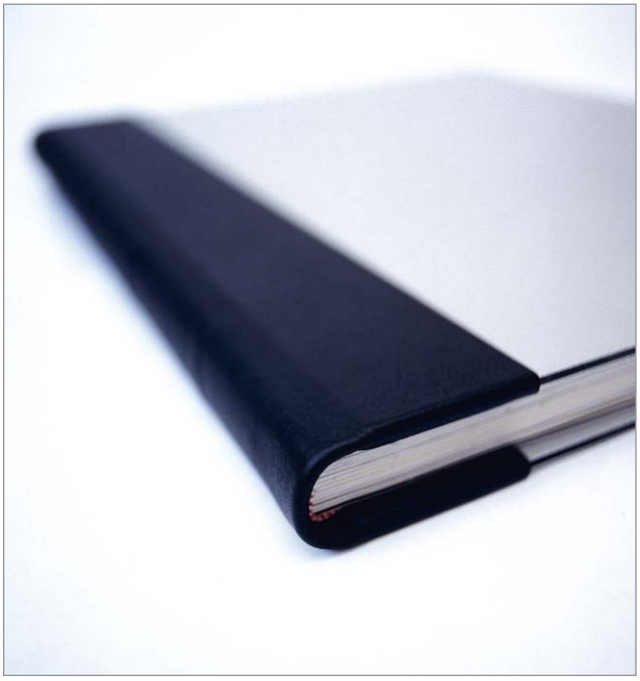
Fine Printing

Robert Cavalli is a master printer in every sense of the word. He has an intuitive sense for improving an image and has worked with some of the finest photographers in the world to realize their visions, creating collaborative works of fine art.

Cavalli uses printing techniques that vary from simple approaches to elaborate techniques that might include darkroom vignetting, heavy diffusion, split contrast (areas of the print with differing contrasts), masking to reveal hidden detail in a negative, texture screens, flashing (exposing part of the print to raw light), soft borders, and a myriad of other self-conceived techniques.

Cavalli is a master in the conventional darkroom, but has also been combining traditional and electronic means of improving an image. Of the fusion, he says, "One approach I've used involves scanning a print and then using the computer for efficient digital manipulation to enhance the final outcome. At this point either a computer-generated print can be produced or a second 4x5-inch negative is made to create a silver-based image. Combining mediums yields the best that chemistry can achieve, while taking advantage of computer technology. Regardless of the techniques used, the ultimate worth of a print is in the lasting impact it has on the viewer."

Cavalli is so well respected that a recent WPPI print exhibit, which featured only prints that earned an Honorable Mention or above, included dozens of Cavalli's prints—he lost count at seventy-five!



Here is a leather and metal cover merged in a magazine-style binding.

GLOSSARY

Balance. A state of visual symmetry among elements in a photograph.

Bleed. A page in a book or album in which the photograph extends to the edges of the page.

Bounce flash. Bouncing the light of a studio or portable flash off a surface, such as a ceiling or wall, to produce indirect, shadowless lighting.

Burning-in. A darkroom or computer printing technique in which specific areas of the image are given additional exposure in order to darken them.

Color temperature. A measurement, noted in degrees Kelvin, describing the color of a light source or film sensitivity. Color films are balanced for 5500°K (daylight), 3200°K (tungsten), or 3400°K (photoflood).

Cross-processing. Developing color negative film in color transparency chemistry or vice versa (developing transparency film in color negative chemistry).

Depth of field. The distance that is sharp beyond and in front of the focus point at a given f-stop.

Dodging. A darkroom or computer printing technique in which specific areas of the print are given less print exposure by blocking the light to those areas of the print, making them lighter.

Double truck. Two facing bleed pages. Usually, this is created so a panoramic or long horizontal image can run across the two pages, going to the edges of the pages.

Dragging the shutter. Using a shutter speed slower than the X-sync speed in order to capture the ambient light in a scene.

Feathering. Deliberately misdirecting the light so that the edge of the beam of light illuminates the subject.

Fill card. A white or silver-foil-covered reflector that is used to redirect light back into the shadow areas of the subject.

Fill light. A secondary light source used to fill in the shadows created by the main light.

Flash-fill. A flash technique that uses electronic flash to lighten the shadows created by the main light source.

Flashing. A darkroom technique used in printing to darken an area of the print by exposing it to raw light.

Flashmeter. A handheld incident light meter that measures both the ambient light of a scene and, when connected to an electronic flash, will read either flash only or a combination of flash and ambient light. They are invaluable for determining outdoor flash exposures and lighting ratios.

Full-length portrait. A pose that includes the full figure of the model. Full-length portraits can show the subject standing, seated, or reclining.

Gatefold. A double-sided foldout page in an album that is hinged or folded so that it can be opened out revealing a single or double page panoramic format.

Gaussian blur. A Photoshop filter that diffuses a digital image.

Gutter. The inside center of a book or album where the pages are bound together.

Head-and-shoulders axis. Imaginary lines running through shoulders (shoulder axis) and down the ridge of the nose (head axis). The head-and-shoulders axes should never be perpendicular to the line of the lens axis.

High-key lighting. A type of lighting characterized by low lighting ratio and a predominance of light tones.

Hot spots. (1) A highlight area of the negative that is overexposed and without detail. Sometimes these areas are etched down to a printable density. (2) The center of the core of light that is often brighter than the edges of the light's core.

Incident light meter. A handheld light meter that measures the amount of light falling on its light-sensitive dome.

Lead-in line. In composition, a pleasing line in the scene that leads the viewer's eye toward the main subject.

Lighting ratio. The difference in intensity between the highlight side of the face and the shadow side of the face. A 3:1 ratio implies that the highlight side is three times brighter than the shadow side of the face.

Low-key lighting. Type of lighting characterized by a high lighting ratio and strong scene contrast as well as a predominance of dark tones.

Main light. The light source that is used to establish the lighting pattern and define the facial features of the subject.

Perspective. The appearance of objects in a scene as determined by their relative distance and position.

Prime lenses. Fixed focal-length lenses as opposed to zooms (variable focal length lenses).

Reflected light meter. A meter that measures the amount of light reflected from a surface or scene. All in-camera meters are of the reflected type.

Reflector. (1) Same as a fill card. (2) A housing on a light that reflects the light outward in a controlled beam.

Rembrandt lighting. A lighting pattern characterized by a triangular highlight on the cheek on the shadow side of the face. This is created by placing the main light at approximately a 45 degree angle to the subject and angling it down toward the face.

Rim lighting. A lighting pattern wherein the main light is placed behind the subject and illuminates the edges of the subject's features. This is most often used with profile poses.

Rule of thirds. A format for composition that divides the image area into thirds, horizontally and vertically. The intersection of two lines is a dynamic point where the subject may be placed for the most visual impact.

Seven-eighths view. Facial pose that shows approximately seven-eighths of the face. It is almost a full-face view as seen from the camera.

Softbox. A diffused light source housed in a box-shaped reflector. The bottom of the box is translucent material; the sidepieces of the box are opaque, but they are coated with a reflective material such as foil on the interior to optimize light output.

Slave. A remote triggering device used to fire auxiliary flash units. These may be optical, or radio-controlled.

Straight flash. The light of an on-camera flash unit that is used without diffusion (*i.e.,* straight).

TTL-balanced fill-flash. An exposure system that reads the flash exposure through the camera lens and adjusts flash output relative to the ambient light for a balanced flash/ambient exposure.

Tension. A state of visual imbalance within a photographic composition.

Three-quarter-length portrait. A pose that shows the subject from the face down to somewhere below the waist.

Three-quarters view. A facial pose that allows the camera to see three-quarters of the facial area. The subject's face is usually turned 45 degrees away from the lens so that the far ear disappears from camera view.

Umbrella. A fabric device, shaped like a rain umbrella, that is used to diffuse light.

Vignette. A semicircular, soft-edged border around the main subject. Vignettes can be either light or dark in tone and can be included at the time of shooting or created later in printing.

Watt-seconds. A numerical system used to rate the power output of electronic flash units. It is primarily used to rate studio strobe systems.

X-sync speed. The shutter speed at which focal-plane shutters synchronize with electronic flash.

Zoom lens. A lens with multiple focal lengths (as opposed to a prime lens).

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nick and Signe Adams. Nick and Signe Adams started Nick Adams Photography in St. George, UT, in 2002. They have been winning awards since they first became WPPI members. They maintain a boutique-type studio business in an historic section of St. George. View their website at www.nickadams.com.

Fernando Basurto *(APM, AOPA)*. Fernando is a wedding photographer who does business in historical uptown Whittier area of Southern California. Specializing in wedding photojournalism Fernando has created some of the most powerful and passionate wedding images of today. His work can be seen at www.elegantphotographer.com/.

Stuart Bebb. Stuart Bebb is a Craftsman of the Guild of Photographers UK and has been awarded Wedding Photographer of the Year in both 2000 and 2002. In 2001 Stuart won *Cosmopolitan Bride* Wedding Photographer of the Year. He was also a finalist in the Fuji Wedding Photographer of the Year. Stuart has been capturing stunning wedding images for over twenty years and works with his wife Jan, who creates and designs all the albums.

David Beckstead. David Beckstead has lived in a small town in Arizona for twenty-two years. With help from the Internet, forums, digital cameras, seminars, WPPI, Pictage and his artistic background, his passion has grown into a national and international wedding photography business. He refers to his style of wedding photography as "artistic photojournalism."

Marcus Bell. Marcus Bell's creative vision, fluid natural style and sensitivity have made him one of Australia's most revered photographers. It's this talent combined with his natural ability to make people feel at ease in front of the lens that attracts so many of his clients. Marcus' work has been published in numerous magazines in Australia and overseas including *Black White, Capture, Portfolio Bride,* and countless other bridal magazines.

Joe Buissink. Joe Buissink is an internationally recognized wedding photographer from Beverly Hills, CA. Almost every potential bride who picks up a bridal magazine will have seen Joe Buissink's photography. He has photographed numerous celebrity weddings, including Christina Aguilera's 2005 wedding, and is a multiple Grand Award winner in WPPI print competition.

Mark Cafeiro. Mark graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a degree in Business Administration with special emphasis in Marketing. He is the owner of several photography businesses, including Pro Photo Alliance, an online proofing solution for labs and professional photographers, and his own private wedding, event, and portrait business.

Bambi Cantrell. Bambi is a decorated photographer from the San Francisco Bay area. She is well known for her creative photojournalistic style and is a highly sought-after speaker at national photographic conventions and schools. She is the author of *The Art of Wedding Photography.*

Robert Cavalli. Robert Cavalli is well known as master print maker whose lab, Still Moving Pictures in Hollywood, CA, attracts the finest portrait and wedding photographers in the country. He is also an accomplished photographer in his own right, holding an MA from the prestigious American Film Institute in Los Angeles.

Michele Celentano. Michele Celentano graduated the Germain School of Photography in 1991, then spent the next four years assisting and photographing weddings for other studios. In 1995 she started her own business photography, and in 1997 she received her certification from the PPA. She has since become a nationally recognized speaker on wedding photography and relocated her business from New York to Arizona.

Jessica Claire. Jessica Claire graduated from North Carolina State University and has studied with photographers all over the country, from North Carolina to Hawaii. She is an

award-winning photographer and a highly sought-after speaker at conventions and trade shows.

Mike Colón. Mike Colón is a celebrated wedding photojournalist from the San Diego area. Colón's natural and fun approach frees his subjects to be themselves, revealing their true personality and emotion. His images combine inner beauty, joy, life, and love frozen in time forever. He has spoken before national audiences on the art of wedding photography.

Noel Del Pilar. Noel is an award-winning wedding photographer from San Juan, Puerto Rico. After fifteen years of photographing weddings, he has established a reputation as a wedding photographer on the cutting edge; his embrace of wedding photojournalism has helped transform the look of wedding photography in Puerto Rico today. Noel specializes in destination weddings and is a preferred vendor of some of the best hotels in Puerto Rico.

Jesh de Rox. Jesh de Rox is a Canadian photographer from Edmonton, Alberta who burst onto the wedding photography scene at the WPPI 2006 convention, where 38 of his entries scored 80 or above. He now teaches extensively all over the country and has a growing wedding business. He is the author and designer of Fine Art Textures, for sale to other photographers for enhancing their artwork, available at www.jeshderox.com.

Dan Doke. Daniel has a drive for perfection, abundant creativity, and special eye for light and form. He is a modern photographer with traditional skills, who draws on his experience in commercial, fashion, and portrait photography to create memorable wedding images.

Mauricio Donelli. Mauricio Donelli is a wedding photographer from Miami, FL. His work is a combination of styles, consisting of traditional photojournalism with a twist of fashion and art. His weddings are photographed in what he calls "real time." His photographs have been published in *Vogue, Town & Country,* and many national and international magazines. He has photographed weddings around the world.

Bruce Dorn and Maura Dutra. These award-winning digital imagemakers learned their craft in Hollywood, New York, and Paris. Maura has twenty years' experience as an art director and visual effects producer, and Bruce capped a youthful career in fashion and advertising photography with a twenty-year tenure in the very exclusive Director's Guild of America. They have earned a plethora of industry awards for excellence in image-making, and now teach worldwide.

Jim and Katarina Garner. Jim and Katarina Garner started photographing weddings in 1999. By fusing editorial fashion photography with a more relaxed, candid approach, Jim and Katarina provide each couple with an amazing collection of images, all while allowing the bride and groom to truly enjoy their wedding celebration.

Jerry Ghionis. Jerry Ghionis of XSiGHT Photography and Video is one of Australia's leading photographers. In 1999, he was honored with the AIPP (Australian Institute of Professional Photography) award for best new talent in Victoria. In 2002, he won the AIPP's Victorian Wedding Album of the Year; a year later, he won the Grand Award in WPPI's album competition.

Greg Gibson. Greg is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner whose assignments have included three Presidential campaigns, daily coverage of the White House, the Gulf War, Super Bowls, and much more. Despite numerous offers to return to journalism, Greg finds shooting weddings the perfect genre to continually test his skills.

Alfred Gordon. Al operates a full-service studio and has photographed weddings throughout the Southeast. In addition to holding numerous degrees from PPA and WPPI, he received the coveted Kodak Trylon Gallery Award twice and has images in the coveted ASP Masters Loan Collection.

Michael Greenberg. Michael Greenberg was born in Russia, studied to become a concert pianist, lived in Israel, got a medical degree and worked as a computer programmer before settling down with a Toronto photography studio. Weddings happened almost by accident. "I did my first wedding. It was my sister's," he says. He did three more weddings that year, then twelve the next, then a hundred. Now he's almost completely booked for a year in advance!

Jeff and Kathleen Hawkins. Jeff and Kathleen operate a high-end wedding and portrait photography studio in Orlando, FL, and are the authors of *Professional Marketing & Selling Techniques for Wedding Photographers* (Amherst Media). Jeff has been a professional photographer for over twenty years. Kathleen holds an MBA and is a past president of the Wedding Professionals of Central Florida (WPCF). They can be reached at www.jeffhawkins.com.

Gene Higa. Gene Higa travels the world doing what he loves: photographing weddings. He is one of the most sought-after wedding photographers in the world. Originally from Los Angeles, Gene makes his home in San Francisco, but calls the world his office. He has been commissioned to photograph weddings in Spain, the Philippines, Peru, India, Italy, Greece, Mexico, Jamaica, Thailand and on and on. For more, visit www.genehiga.com.

Kevin Jairaj. Kevin is a fashion photographer turned wedding and portrait photographer whose creative eye has earned him a stellar reputation in the Dallas/Fort Worth, TX area. His web site is www.kjimages.com.

Claudia Kronenberg. Claudia Kronenberg is the owner of CKP, Inc. and a master of multitasking. She shoots weddings and portraits, handles marketing and business for the studio, as well as breaking out into the national speaking world. Her passion for her profession is unparalleled.

Emin Kuliyev. Emin is originally from Russia, a large town in Azerbaijan. He has been photographing weddings in New York for more than six years and he has trained under many respected photographers from around the world. He started his own wedding studio in the Bronx in 2000. Today he is a well respected and award-winning wedding photographer.

Charles and Jennifer Maring. Charles and Jennifer Maring own Maring Photography Inc. in Wallingford, CT. His parents, also photographers, operate Rlab (resolutionlab.com), a digital lab that does all of the work for Maring Photography and other discriminating photographers. Charles Maring was the winner of WPPI's Album of the Year Award in 2001.

Dennis Orchard. Dennis Orchard is a member of the British Guild of portrait and wedding photographers, and has been a speaker and an award-winner at numerous WPPI conventions. His unique wedding photography has earned him many awards, including WPPI's Accolade of Lifetime Photographic Excellence.

Joe Photo. Joe Photo's wedding images have been featured in numerous publications such as *Grace Ormonde's Wedding Style, Elegant Bride, Wedding Dresses,* and *Modern Bride*. His weddings have also been seen on NBC's *Life Moments* and Lifetime's *Weddings of a Lifetime* and *My Best Friend's Wedding.*

JB and DeEtte Sallee. Sallee Photography has only been in business since 2003, but it has already earned many accomplishments. In 2004, JB received the first Hy Sheanin Memorial Scholarship through WPPI. In 2005, JB and DeEtte were also named Dallas Photographer of The Year.

Martin Schembri *(M.Photog. AIPP)*. Martin Schembri has been winning national awards in his native Australia for 20 years. He has achieved a Double Master of Photography with the AIPP. He is an internationally recognized portrait, wedding, and commercial photographer and has conducted seminars on his unique style of photography all over the world.

Michael Schuhmann. Michael Schuhmann of Tampa Bay, FL, is an acclaimed wedding photojournalist who believes in creating weddings with the flair of the fashion and bridal magazines. He says, "I document weddings as a journalist and an artist, reporting what takes place, capturing the essence of the moment." He has been the subject of profiles in *Rangefinder* magazine and *Studio Photography & Design* magazine.

Kenneth Sklute. Kenneth began his career in Long Island, and now operates a thriving studio in Arizona. He has been named Long Island Wedding Photographer of The Year (fourteen times!), PPA Photographer of the Year, and APPA Wedding Photographer of the Year. He has also earned numerous Fuji Masterpiece Awards and Kodak Gallery Awards.

Cherie Steinberg Coté. Cherie Steinberg Coté began her photography career as a photojournalist at the *Toronto Sun,* where she had the distinction of being the first female freelance photographer. She currently lives in Los Angeles and has recently been published in the *L.A. Times, Los Angeles Magazine,* and *Town & Country.*

Alisha and Brook Todd. Alisha and Brook Todd, from Aptos, California, share their passion for art in their blend of documentary and fine-art photography. They are award-winning photographers in both PPA and WPPI competitions and have been featured in numerous wedding and photography magazines.

Marc Weisberg. Marc Weisberg specializes in wedding and event photography. A graduate of UC Irvine with a degree in fine art and photography, he also attended the School of Visual Arts in New York City before relocating to Southern California in 1991. His images have been featured in *Wines and Spirits, Riviera*, *Orange Coast Magazine,* and *Where Los Angeles.*

Joel and Rita Wiebner. The Wiebners are a husband and wife photography team, based in Lancaster, PA, who pride themselves on creativity, their playful nature, and their closeness with their clients. In 2007, they opened their first wedding and portrait gallery space in the art district in downtown Lancaster.

David Anthony Williams *(M.Photog. FRPS)*. Williams operates a wedding studio in Ashburton, Victoria, Australia. In 1992, he was awarded Associateship and Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (FRPS). In 2000, he was awarded the Accolade of Outstanding Photographic Achievement from WPPI. He was also a Grand Award winner at their annual conventions in both 1997 and 2000.

Jeffrey and Julia Woods. Jeffrey and Julia Woods are award-winning wedding and portrait photographers who work as a team. They were awarded WPPI's Best Wedding Album of the Year for 2002 and 2003, two Fuji Masterpiece awards, and a Kodak Gallery Award. See more of their images at www.jwweddinglife.com.

Yervant Zanazanian *(M. Photog. AIPP, F.AIPP)*. Yervant was born in Ethiopia (East Africa), where he worked after school at his father's photography business (his father was photographer to the Emperor Hailé Silassé of Ethiopia). Yervant owns one of the most prestigious photography studios of Australia and services clients both nationally and internationally.

Regina and Denis Zaslavets. Denis and Regina are originally from Odessa, Ukraine. She has resided in the U.S. for 27 years and Denis only three years. They own Assolux Photography, a small studio where they do portraiture for adults and children, formal engagements, and family portraits—but weddings, which they cover as a team, are their main passion.

INDEX

A

Adobe InDesign, 107, 112, 115
Adobe Photoshop, 10–11, 107, 113, 116
Albums, wedding, 101–13
  approval by the couple, 112–13
  bound, 106–7
  covers, 106
  creativity in design, 106, 111–12
  left and right pages, 101–3
  library binding, 106
  magazine-style, 106–13
  miniature, 109, 111
  post-mounted, 106
  reading direction, 105
  storytelling, 107–11
  templates, 111
  title page, 101
  traditional, 105–6
  variety of images, 103–4
  visual weight, 104–5
Albums Australia TDA-2 software, 106, 116
Anticipating moments, 19–20
Arms, posing, 77
Assistants, 16–19
Autofocus, 28–31
  multiple-area, 29–30, 31
  predicative, 30–31
Awareness of your surroundings, 23–24

B

Backgrounds in group portraits, 90–93
Barebulb flash, 39
Borders, adding to images, 113–15
Bounce flash devices, 38–39
Bouquet toss, 59–60
Bride and groom, portraits of, 85–89
  posing, 87–89
  timing, 87
Bride, photographing, 49–51, 81–82
  arrival at church, 52
  back of the dress, 82
  before the ceremony, 49–51
  bouquet, 82
  exit shots, 54–55
  formal portraits, 81–82
  outdoors, 82
  veil, 82

C

Camera height for correct perspective, 80–81
Camera, tilting, 116–17
Cavalli, Robert, 117
Ceremony coverage, 52–56
  bride's arrival, 52
  ceremony, 52–53
  exit shots, 53–56
  procession, 52
Children at the wedding, 61
Colón, Mike, 36
Composition, 62–71, 93
  balance, 69–70
  contrast, 66–67
  direction, 65
  group portraits, 93
  lines, 67–68
  pleasing forms, 65
  rule of thirds, 62–65
  shape, 68–69
  subject tone, 66
  tension, 69–70
Concentration, 55
Consultation, 43
Contrast, 66–67
Corel Painter, 111
Couples, posing, 85–89, 93–94

Cross-processing effect, 115
Cutting the cake, 59

D

Depth of field in group portraits, 100
Detail shots, 52, 57, 109
  at the reception, 57
  before the wedding, 52
  "Detail Minis," 109
Digital revolution, 10
Digital SLRs, 27–33
  autofocus, 28–31
  ISO settings, 31–33
  LCD screen, 31
  manufacturers, 28
Dressing for success, 20

E

Emotion, capturing, 20–21
Engagement portraits, 47–49
Enjoying yourself, 25
Equipment, 27–42
  bounce flash devices, 38–39
  digital SLRs, 27–33
  flash, 37–41
  lenses, 28–29
Evolution of wedding photojournalism, 8–11
Eyes, direction of gaze, 76–77

F

Face positions, 74–76
  profile view, 76
  seven-eighths view, 75
  three-quarters view, 75–76
Feet, posing, 78–80
Film photography, 10, 27
First dance, 59
Flash, 37–42, 57
  barebulb, 39
  bounce devices, 38–39
  falloff, 39
  flashmeters, 41
  off-camera, 38
  on-camera, 37–38
  remote triggering, 41–42, 57
  studio systems, 39–41
  TTL, 37–39
Flashmeters, 41
Flightcheck software, 112
Focal-length factors, 28–29, 37
Focusing group portraits, 100
Formal portraits, *see* Posing for "formals"

G

Gatefold images, 116
Groom, photographing, 51–52, 82–85
  before the ceremony, 51–52
  couples, 93–94
  cuffs, 85
  expression, 85
  formal portraits, 82–85
  lighting, 85
  necktie, 85
Group portraits, 16, 72–89, 90–100
  backgrounds, 90–92
  bride and groom, 85–89
  depth of field, 100
  chair as a posing tool, 97
  composition, 93
  even-numbered groups, 97
  focus, 100
  hands in, 97–99
  large groups, 97–100
  panoramic images, 99
(Group portraits, cont'd)
  photojournalistic approach to, 72–73
  trios, 94
  types of groups, 90

H

Handcoloring, 116
Hands, posing, 77–78, 82, 85, 97–99

I

Idealization, 15, 21–22
Image sensors, 28, 29, 37
  Foveon X3, 28
  size of, 29, 37
Infrared photography, 115–16
ISO settings, 10, 31–33, 56

K

Kodak Retouching Colors, 116

L

Lenses, 28–29, 33–37
  focal length and chip size, 37
  manufacturers, 29
  pre-digital, 28–29
  prime, 35
  telephotos, 36–37
  vibration reduction, 36
  wide-angles, 35–36
  zoom, 33–35
Lighting at the reception, 60–61
  pole lighting, 60
  videographer's lighting, 60–61
Light modifiers, 38–39, 41, 42, 57
  bounce flash devices, 38–39
  reflectors, 42
  umbrellas, 41, 57
Light stands, 42
Location scouting, 43–47

M
Maring, Charles, 107, 109–12
Meters, light, 41

N
Noise, 33

O
Observation, powers of, 13–15

P
Panoramic images, 99, 116
People skills, 24–25
Pole lighting, 60
Portrait lengths, 80
  full-length, 80
  head-and-shoulders, 80
  three-quarter length, 80
Posing for "formals," 16, 72–89
  arms, 77
  bridal portraits, 81–82
  bride and groom together, 85–89
  camera height for correct perspective, 80–81
  eyes, direction of gaze, 76–77
  face positions, 74–76
  feet, 78–80
  groom's portraits, 82–85
  hands, 77–78
  head and shoulders, 74
  photojournalistic approach to, 72–73
  portrait lengths, 80
Pre-ceremony coverage, 49–52
  bride, 49–51
  detail shots, 52
  groom, 51–52
Preparation, 19–20, 43–61, 56, 81
  bride and groom, meeting with, 43
(Preparation, cont'd)
  engagement portraits, 47–49
  formals, planning time for, 81
  for reception coverage, 56
  importance of, 19–20
  location scouting, 43–47
  timeline, developing a, 47
Printing, 117
Prismacolor pencils, 116

Q
Quark XPress, 107, 112, 115

R
Reaction time, 20
Reception, photographing, 56–61
  bouquet toss, 59–60
  couple leaving, 60
  cutting the cake, 59
  detail shots, 57
  first dance, 59
  key players, 57
  lighting at, 60–61
  photojournalistic approach, 56–57
  room overviews, 56
  scheduled events, 57
  table shots, 60
Reflectors, 42
Reggie, Denis, 9–10
Remote triggering, flash, 41–42, 57
Rings, photographing, 60
Romance, 25
Rule of thirds, 62–65

S
Schembri, Martin, 111
Special effects, 99, 113–16
  borders, 113–15
  cross-processing, 115
  gatefolds, 116
(Special effects, cont'd)
  handcoloring, 116
  infrared, 115–16
  panoramics, 99, 116
  tilting the camera, 116–17
Storytelling, 15–16
Studio flash systems, 39–41
  modifiers, 41
  monolights, 40
Style, 23

T
Table shots, 60
Tiffen Dfx filters, 115
Timeline, developing a, 47
Traditional wedding photography, 12–13

U
Umbrellas, 41, 57
Uniqueness, 22–23

V
Vendors, networking with, 48
Videographer's lighting, 60–61

W
Williams, David Anthony, 109
WPI, 8–9
WPPI, 8–9

Y
Yervant's Page Gallery, 111

Z
Zanazanian, Yervant, 111

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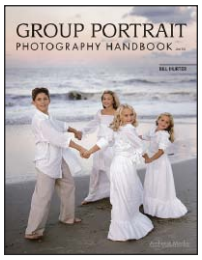

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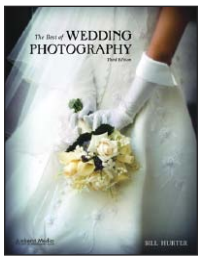

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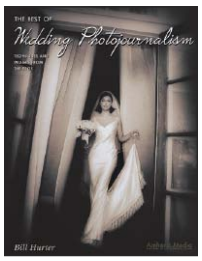

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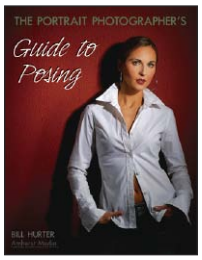

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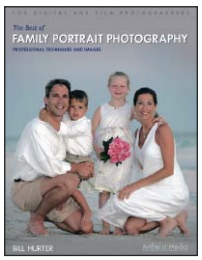

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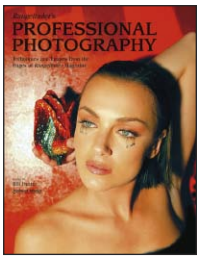

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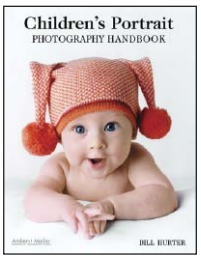

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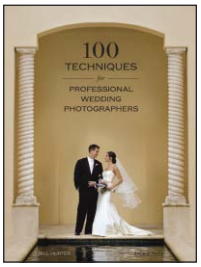

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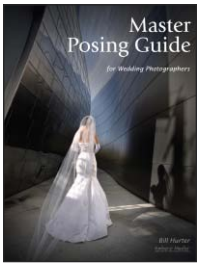

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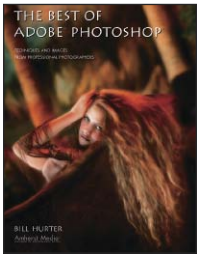

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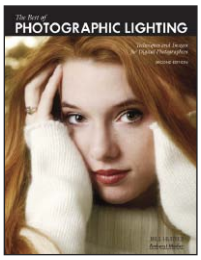

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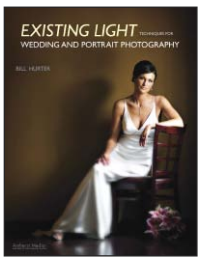

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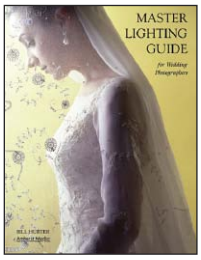

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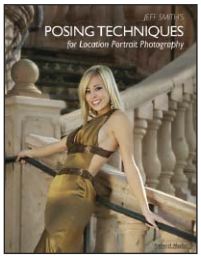

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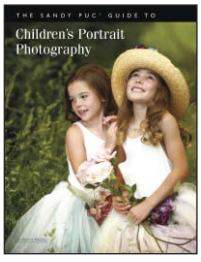

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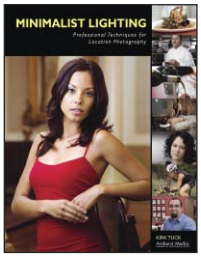

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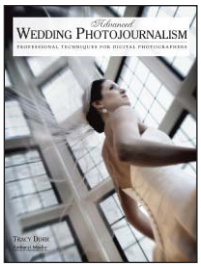

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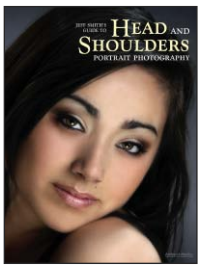

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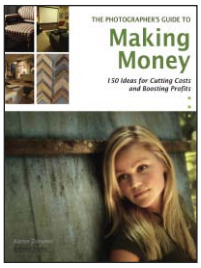

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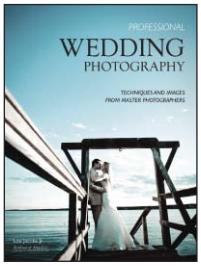

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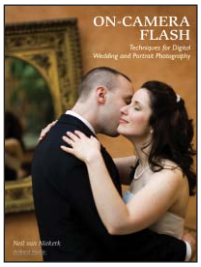

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